



RAZZORCAKE

EDDY CURRENT
SUPPRESSION
RING

Oi Polloi
Ringers

Bruce
Moreland
Wall Of Voodoo
Nervous Gender
Skulls

#55

\$4

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Razorcake would love to be open to the general public, to become a space open to the community. Every cent of every benefit thrown in Razorcake's name that we don't throw ourselves has been set aside for that space. In all honesty, we're a long way from that goal. We can't open our current HQ up to the general public since we're in the basement of a house on a residential street.

We also don't like to do anything half-assed if we can avoid it. We'd rather work slowly towards a long-term goal and have all the essential pieces in place before dedicating ourselves. We've just seen too many well-intentioned centers close up shop from a lack of money, lack of permits, or lack of understanding of the neighborhood it's located in.

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Contact us via www.razorcake.org if you'd like to help out.

Thank you.

—Todd Taylor

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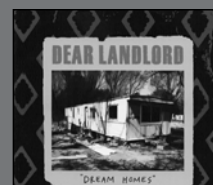
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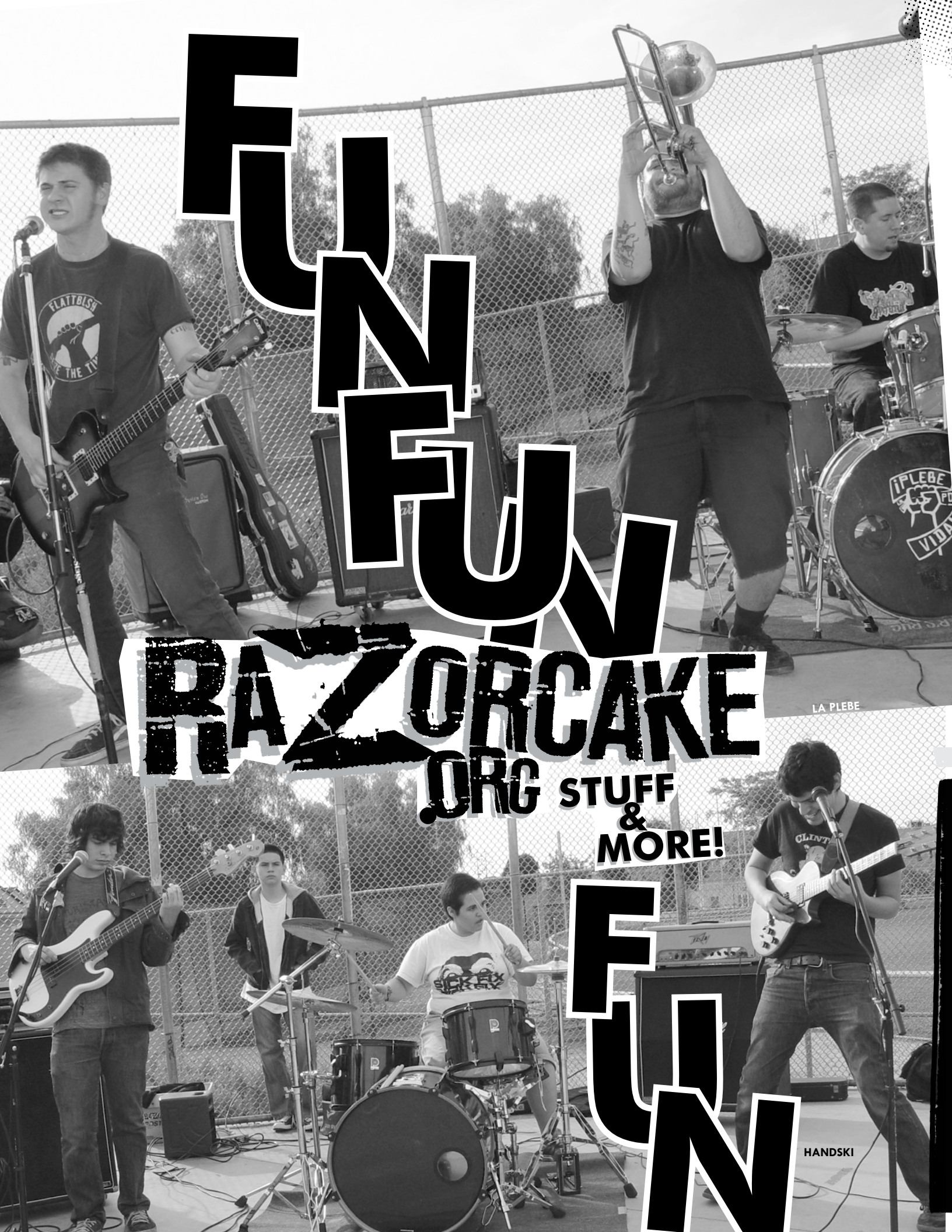
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FUN
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RAZORCAKE
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MORE!

FUN

LA PLEBE

HANDSKI

Magic Beer from the Sky

The lights flickered several times before the power went out. It was only a moment of darkness. Razorcake HQ is in a basement; outside were ominous clouds. The only sound was a single intermittent beep, the signal that our backup battery was doing its job. The "Razorcake brain" computer was still ticking away. I activated the computer screen by jiggling the mouse. No error messages. Daryl and I high fived.

It's a one-in-ten-thousand shot of the brain failing, but over half of 2009 we spent fixing the brain. Twice—in completely different ways with different consequences. It was a nightmare. I'm not going to say that I didn't complain or that I didn't want to say, "fuck it," and start work on a zine carved out of clay tablets.

A *Six Million Dollar Man* title sequence would have been way cooler, when—during bionic sounds and a quick montage—Daryl and I were given cyborg parts and we worked at a pace no known recording device could capture so that the good ship Razorcake was back up and running ridiculously fast in a day or two. The reality isn't hard to visualize. Sit in front of a computer. Swear and type in front of it for over a hundred hours, dicking around with settings and reinputting lost data while simultaneously making another issue.

I often space out on what a unique beast *Razorcake* is because I've been living with it for over nine years. Yet, in darkness and facing a void, one gets some time to ask the "Why?" Why go through all this frustration? The first thing that comes to me is that I'm far from being alone in the metaphorical darkness. Every issue is the hard, combined work of over a hundred people who I admire, trust, and enjoy hanging out with. The other, is that we don't operate like a "music magazine."

"Music magazines" base everything around advertising: their entire budgets and their content. "Music magazines" assign features

and interviews to their writers, usually at the behest of the advertisers or publicists. The writers—regardless of what they think of a featured band's music—will write positively or they won't be published. In a nutshell, that's why "music magazines" have either largely failed or further mutated into "lifestyle magazines" in this tough economy. Although not progressive-fascist, Razorcake is guided by some stringent policies: a firewall between advertising and editorial is one of them.

With rare exception, do I assign any type of writing beyond doing out the review material with Daryl. Razorcake has an open submission policy. I let people's enthusiasm guide us as long as it's sufficiently "Razorcakey" (an intentionally vague set of criteria backed by high quality writing). If someone's willing to clear the hurdles we've placed to get into print in these pages—keeping in mind that not a single person gets paid for their creative work—the last thing I'm considering is "But their label doesn't advertise with us." We're never at a loss for content in our pages.

After the lights came on and the auxiliary computers fired up, I felt like I was part of the future—the future that includes teleporters and magic beer from the sky.

As I logged into my email program, I was feeling awesome. My wife and I had tickets to see my favorite historian and *Razorcake* #6 "cover model," Howard Zinn, talk in a couple days. I clicked on an email header to discover that Howard had died peacefully earlier that day.

My small "Why" had been answered, again.

If you and I don't keep doing this, nobody will. We already see how the "professionals" and their well-financed failures continue to get it wrong.

—Todd Taylor

AD / CONTRIBUTOR DEADLINES

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with apologies to The Ink Spots
Cover photo by BullyRook

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**"If he had no good
clothes, at least he had
no place to go which
required good clothes."**

—John Steinbeck, *The Pastures of Heaven*

This issue is dedicated to the memories of Howard Zinn, Jay Reatard, and Olga Ruskin.



Olga Ruskin (1931-2010) *Nardwuar's* Mom. She learned to play drums at the age of seventy-seven while in hospital.



Hey Zoey!
Welcome to the world!
Naptime!

THANK YOU: Oh, the mileage and time travel on the cover: BullyRook was in Memphis for the shot, Mikey Young's from Melbourne, and I'm totally ganking the Ink Spots Vol. 2 artwork in Los Angeles thanks for a long-shot wish coming true with the Eddy Current Suppression Ring cover; Thanks, Howard, for helping give Razorcake a true focus to Brad Beshaw for his illo. in Sean's column; Rainy afternoon of shattered glass thanks to Claire for her illo. in Jim's column; Hü farted? thanks to Jason Armadillo for his illo. in Nerb's column; The chicken could be instructional in teaching kids math. "Eight! Nine! Ten! Eleven!" thanks to Dan "The Eggman" Eggert for his photo; The first person to say "AC/DC? Really?" I thought this was a punk zine?" is unwittingly financing their own black eyes via Dale's knuckles thanks to Craig (not Ryan) for his Bon Scott illo.; Scarecrow, rural, "trend" thanks to Dave Williams for his guest column and Jackie Rusted for her illo.; I bet Pee Wee's bike could win the Tour De France—just sayin'—thanks to Bill Pintel for his illo. in Gary's column; Roses on the casket, rock springs eternal thanks to Danny Martin for his Jay Reatard illo. in Maddy's column; 1994 photocopier thanks to Andria Lisle for permission to re-print the first Reatards interview from Mississippi Goddamn; "Bored, so we'll all punch each other in the face for a bit. Don't mind us," thanks to Brian Damage, Dave Brainwreck, Lauren Measure, and Brian Kellher for their collective badass help with the Ringers interview; If you're fixing to go to show to cry about nuclear war, do not under any circumstance see Oi Polloi thanks to Kevin Dunn, Fred Loridant, and Keith Rosson for their contributions to that interview; The gloves really do become obvious in the photos thanks to Richard Sharman and BullyRook for their ECSR shots; Helping click together some of the near-invisible links in the L.A. punk chain thanks to Ryan Leach, Dawn Wirth, and Linda Burdick for the Bruce Moreland interview; Chris Baxter makes us look dapper-fancy thanks to his Photoshop help; "Is it 'affect' or 'effect'?" thanks to Kari Hamanaka, Vincent Battilana, Adrian Salas, Juan Espinosa, Rene Navarro, and Josh Robles for their proof reeding: Jokes! Funny!; The first thousand reviews are the easiest to write, then that shit gets hard thanks to the following for their music, zine, book, and DVD reviews: Jeff Proctor, Jennifer Whiteford, Corinne, Joe Dana, Nerb, Mike Frame, Craven Rock, Jennifer Federico, Kurt Morris, Ryan Horky, Dave Brainwreck, Dave Rohm, Kristen K., Matt Average, MP Johnson, Sean Koeppenick, Donaloningdon, Rene Navarro, Art Ettinger, Ty Stranglehold, CT Terry, Jimmy Alvarado, Billups Allen, Juan Espinosa, Josh Benke, Reyana Ali, NL Dewart, Joe Evans III, Ian Wise, Vincent Battilana, Bryan Static, Steve Hart, Dave Williams, Keith Rosson, Jake Shut, Maddy Tight Pants, Andy Conway, Sean Stewart, Lauren Trout, and Noah WK; These folks were kindly enough to step over our threshold and give us a hand: Adrian Salas, Samantha Beerhouse, Juan Espinosa, Rene Navarro, Ever Velasquez, NL Dewart, Matt Braun, Joe Dana, Adrian Chi, Chris Devlin, Josh Robles, Matt Average, Julia Smut, and Donisthekingofbulkmail; Phill Legault is secretly making razorcake.org more better; Jeff Proctor, Megan Pants, and Samantha Beerhouse talk to the interweb on RC's behalf; Mary-Clare Stevens provides invaluable daily assistance.

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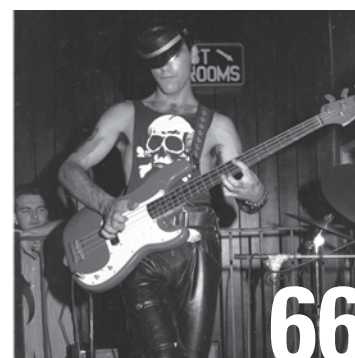
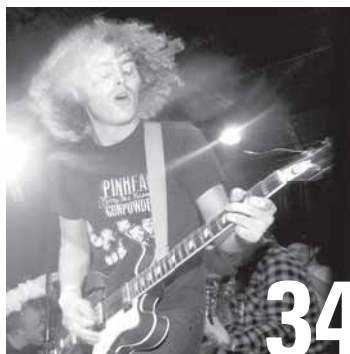
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A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG

SEAN CARSWELL

“Historically speaking, people like me have mattered. I do matter.”

A PERSON'S HISTORY OF HOWARD ZINN, 1922-PRESENT

Celebrity deaths elicit some strange reactions. I sometimes get wrapped up in mourning the loss and forget that I didn't know the person. I was hit pretty hard by the deaths of Joe Strummer and Joey Ramone, even though I'd never met them and had no intention of meeting them. I have to remember that the things I love about those guys still exist very much in the present. I can listen to them sing any time I want to. And, let's face it, the grand productive days were over for those two. As decent as their final releases were, neither of them was going to produce another *Give 'Em Enough Rope* or *End of the Century*.

Maybe the fact that three of the original Ramones are dead and all of the original Eagles are still alive is proof that, if a god does exist, he's a bit of a dick. The point remains that celebrity deaths need to be taken with a grain of salt, but I'm struggling over this most recent one.

On January 27, 2010, we lost Howard Zinn. Among other things, Zinn is the author of *A People's History of the United States, 1492-Present*, which is probably the most comprehensive history of Americans who fought against racism, sexism, imperialism, and classism; of Native Americans who refused to be annihilated, of African Americans who refused to be dehumanized, of women who refused to be the second sex, of citizens who fought against wars rather than in them, and of workers who fought against exploitation. I remember my first time reading *A People's History*. It was about a dozen years ago. I was living in a small town in Florida, working as a construction supervisor. The eight-hundred page tome rode shotgun with me as I drove my truck from jobsite to jobsite. I read snatches of it during breaks, eating lunch, waiting for subcontractors to show up, or sitting in my thrift store recliner in my one-bedroom apartment. It was a time in my life when I felt particularly powerless. Although most of the construction workers viewed me as a boss, I had no real authority. I made less money than most of the skilled workers (many of whom were less skilled than me), and it was becoming more and more clear to me that I

was just fuel in a generator that powered the banking and insurance industries—the ones who really make the money in construction. I'd spent a decade trying to get out of these kinds of jobs. I'd gotten two college degrees (a bachelor's and a master's). I'd published my first novel. And I still found myself in a low rent apartment in a white trash neighborhood, living a life that most of America feels comfortable calling white trash. Amid this atmosphere, *A People's History* was empowering.

Zinn, like all historians, tells history from his point of view. His values are reflected in whom he chooses as historically significant and what events he chooses to focus on. Unlike most histories that I was familiar with, though, Zinn focused on people like me. He was less concerned with presidents, generals, and leaders of business (unless he was knocking them off their pedestals). Instead, he acknowledged that real change comes from the bottom up. While Abraham Lincoln may have signed the bill that freed the slaves, he didn't do it out of a deep-seeded belief in social justice. He did it as a response to an overwhelming resistance movement that fought against slavery, be it through the dozens of violent slave uprisings throughout the South, the Quaker network of safe houses for escaped slaves, the challenges to the Fugitive Slave Act, or the narratives of writers like Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs. In most cases, politicians don't act. They react. And their reactions are often based on the uprisings and resistance movements of ordinary people.

Think for a few seconds about how significant this perspective is. In the American educational system, we're taught to look for heroes. Christopher Columbus discovers America. George Washington wins the American Revolution. Abraham Lincoln frees the slaves. General MacArthur leads the Good War and defeats fascism. Martin Luther King gives a few speeches and ends racism. This type of mythology pervades our national consciousness. It is manifested in our movies, where the action movie genre is dedicated to promoting the myth that a single man (with the right amount of firepower and a few

inhuman stunts) can simplify any complex concept and solve it himself, while we get to sit idly by, eating popcorn and drinking soda. And we believe it. Sometimes, we even elect one of those action heroes as governor. Or we elect Obama president and expect him to give us jobs and money, take on the health care industry, and end two wars by himself. And when Schwarzenegger proves to be exactly the idiot he sounds like, and Obama demonstrates that the president of the United States can't solve all our problems, we blame the men themselves without questioning the underlying myth that enabled us to place these unrealistic expectations on them.

We also ignore our personal responsibility.

So for me, reading *A People's History* a dozen years ago hammered home the point that I had to take responsibility for my own actions. I couldn't just sit around my low rent apartment and complain about the system and its injustices. Or I could. It just didn't do anyone any good. What I needed to do, instead, was get off my ass and fight for what I believed in. And I had to do it as a lifestyle change—something I could do every day.

I looked at how Zinn fought for what he believed in and noticed that he stuck with his strengths. He worked for social justice as a historian, as a speaker, as a writer, and as a teacher. And I thought to myself, what are my strengths? Well, both of my degrees were in writing, so I needed to stick with that. And I was an excellent student and researcher. I was comfortable talking in front of a crowd, and I could articulate my ideas verbally. In short, though history isn't my discipline, many of my strengths were similar to Zinn's. So I could use him as a role model.

I picked the issues that were important to me to fight for. I wanted (and still want) a free media, and I couldn't just kill Rupert Murdoch like some action film hero would (and even if I could, I'd have to remember that his real power comes from his legions of followers, not from Murdoch himself). But I could co-found this here punk rock magazine. I could write hundreds of essays and stories for dozens of independent magazines. I could write books that dealt with American classism and get them

published on indie presses. And so I did. My writing may not have the impact that Zinn's has, but I'm doing about as well as he was doing at my age. If I stay on his schedule, I have twenty-one more years to come up with my equivalent of *A People's History*. I have forty-eight more years to become the cultural force that he is today.

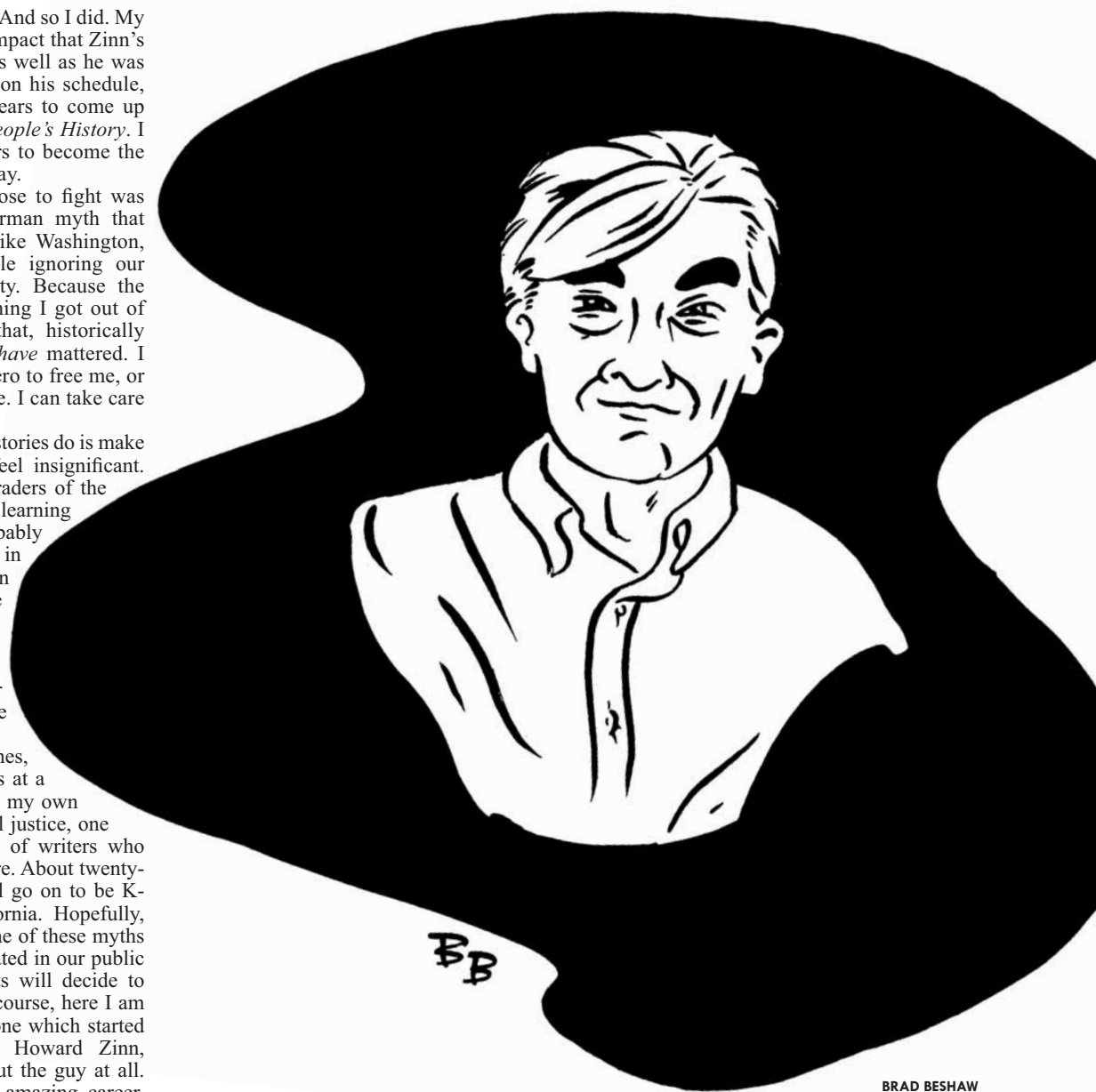
The second issue I chose to fight was this creation of the Superman myth that enables us to deify men like Washington, Lincoln, and Obama while ignoring our own personal responsibility. Because the second really significant thing I got out of *A People's History* was that, historically speaking, people like me *have* mattered. I do matter. I don't need a hero to free me, or a politician to give me hope. I can take care of these things myself.

One thing traditional histories do is make people like you and me feel insignificant. In all likelihood, second graders of the future are not going to be learning about us. Punk rock probably won't even be a footnote in texts in fifty years. But we can ask, whose traditions guide these traditional histories? How can we change them? How can we write a history that defies the myth of super humans and empowers those second graders?

So, along these lines, I've spent the last six years at a state university, developing my own personal pedagogy of social justice, one that explores the literature of writers who resisted the powers that were. About twenty-percent of my students will go on to be K-12 teachers here in California. Hopefully, by learning to question some of these myths that continue to be perpetuated in our public school system, my students will decide to stop perpetuating them. Of course, here I am at the end of my column, one which started out seemingly eulogizing Howard Zinn, and I've hardly talked about the guy at all. I haven't talked about his amazing career, his wonderful books, or so many things that made him great. I haven't even talked about the time I spent with him—because I actually did meet him and spent time with him. He was nice enough to stay in touch with me for a little bit after that. He even blurbed one of my books for me. He was a great human being. But, first of all, I've already written quite a bit about Zinn in *Razorcake* (see, for instance, the interview Todd and I did with him in issue #6, my story about that interview in issue #31, plus the multiple reviews I did of his work in other issues). And, second of all, it would be contradictory to write a eulogy that puts Zinn on a pedestal while I compliment him for teaching me that no one belongs on a pedestal. So, instead, I just want to take this moment to thank him, a couple of months too late, for teaching me that I have the power to change my own life.

Thanks, Howard. I miss you already.

—Sean Carswell



BRAD BESHAW

**IT WOULD BE CONTRADICTIONARY
TO WRITE A EULOGY THAT
PUTS ZINN ON A PEDESTAL
WHILE I COMPLIMENT HIM FOR
TEACHING ME THAT
NO ONE BELONGS
ON A PEDESTAL.**



LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

“I am content with the status quo even when the status quo is all kinds of fucked up.”

First Response

A few weeks ago I was on my way to my writing group, which meets weekly on Wednesday nights. We'd been having some really bad weather here in San Diego. Lots of rain, lots of water where it shouldn't be, and lots of accidents.

The storm peaked at almost half-past six on Wednesday evening. I wasn't thinking about the monster-sized puddles or the rain pelting the windshield faster than my wipers could keep up with, or the big white truck on my ass. I was thinking about burritos. I was thinking about carne asada. I was thinking about what everyone thinks when they're in their car: I was thinking about time and whether or not I had enough of it.

In spite of the weather, I was making good progress, but that was about to change. The freeway backs up at the junction to another freeway. I knew I needed to stay in the left lane, the passing lane, to avoid the bulk of the mess, but the water was accumulating and I hydroplaned. Not good. As soon as I got around the traffic snarl, I moved over and up onto the crown of the road. Moby Dick behind me barreled on ahead at a high speed, kicking up so much water in its wake I could barely make out its tail lights. And then the lights disappeared.

Peering through the mist and the rain the fog, the water beating down, the water splashing up, the water wiping left and right, I saw the truck balancing on its nose like a massive sea mammal doing a trick at the water park, like freaking Shamu. The truck completed its flip turn in the air and fell over to its side on the freeway, blocking the fast lane and part of the next.

I hit the brakes and zipped around the truck.

I sold my own truck, a 1995 Ford F1-50, a little over a year ago for \$2,000 and a bag of habañeros. I inherited my wife's car, a little blue Volkswagen Golf. It's a good little car and gets great gas mileage, but it's slightly embarrassing. I'm a big man in a little Pepsi car. I zip everywhere I go, whether I like it or not.

I pulled over onto the fast lane about twenty yards ahead of the truck. It was really pouring down rain, so much louder after I cut the engine. Apocalyptic weather. I tried to call 911 but they were busy. At this moment in time, people were losing their shit all over the county, accidents everywhere. I looked in my rearview mirror. The truck was very, very still. I really didn't want to see mangled bodies. I didn't want to see severed heads

and crushed limbs and pieces of broken glass smashed into someone's face. I asked myself, *What should I do?*

I got out of the car. I was soaked as soon as I stepped onto the shoulder and approached the accident. The truck looked like a beached killer whale. All white on one side, black on the other. Its headlights aimed crazily at the barrier wall. A man popped out of the passenger window now facing skyward like a hatch on a ship and clambered down to the asphalt. And then he did something insanely dangerous: he tried to push the truck over in the middle of the fast lane of a major east-west artery on a San Diego freeway. It was a kid, of course. An athletic-looking Latino in his early twenties with short black hair.

“Hey!” I shouted. “Get out of the road!” He looked around, took in his surroundings, moved onto the shoulder. I asked him if he was okay. He said he was fine and jumped back into the truck. The truck was steaming, not smoking, but still.

Another truck pulled over. Most of the cars did not. Most of the cars continued to drive too fast. Honking and swerving, braking and skidding, and then driving too fast again.

Two men arrived at the scene. They had more sense than I did. They told the kid to cut the engine and turn on the hazards and get the hell out of the truck before someone slammed into him.

The kid did all of these things and popped out of the truck again. He appeared to be unharmed, but slightly unhinged; not quite right. He seemed preoccupied. He squatted against the barrier wall and closed his eyes. I told him not to close his eyes. The men asked him if he would he like to sit in their truck, to get out of the rain.

“I'm fine,” he insisted. He said it like one of us needed convincing. It was as if the accident had triggered some kind of immensity in his life that was greater than the accident itself. His shoes were scattered on the side of the road. A gas can hung from a cord secured to the bed of the truck. The rain was so fierce that when I looked at the man trying to dial 911 on his cell phone, I thought: *How are you even out here in this rain before remembering Oh, I'm out here in it, too.* That stretch of freeway was like new territory. It wasn't the fast lane anymore. For a few strange minutes, it belonged to us.

We got him to stand in front of the truck because there were close calls. Cars came

this close to clipping the tail end of the truck as they tried to maneuver around it. I remembered that I had an emergency kit. I remembered that I had flares. I went to get them but another vehicle stopped and they had flares. I am a terrible first responder. I would make a lousy EMT.

Flares were lit. Flares were placed into position. The kid wanted to make a phone call. This I could help him with.

I took the kid to my car, told him to sit down, but he didn't want to get the upholstery wet. I told him I'd rather he got the seats wet than my phone, so he leaned into the car to make a call.

The ambulance arrived. The city reclaimed its turf. The men in the truck left. But the kid wouldn't get off the phone. I talked to the paramedics and told them, *He's over there*, and pointed to my car, still sitting there in the fast lane. They took it from there. I asked if there was anything else they needed from me and they said no, thank you for stopping. You did the right thing.

I wasn't so sure.

I didn't go to my writing group. I was too wet, my clothes soaked. I got in my car and white knuckled it home. I saw two more white trucks jacked up with big tires driving way, way too fast. *Your tires are big*, I thought, *but your high center of gravity and small brains will get you in the end. If you flip over, I'm not helping you. You're on your own.*

And then the regrets kicked in. *I could have been killed.* If not by the stupid kid in the truck, then by another stupid kid driving too fast or loaded on alcohol or keyed up on something illegal and slamming into the scene of the accident. The freeways were filled with stupid kids, stupid kids like me.

I took a hot shower but it didn't help. I needed a beer, a glass of wine, a couple shots of tequila, and a vicodin—two vicodins. Two vicodins and a bottle of whiskey. Maybe I could go to the emergency room and tell them I was having a panic attack, a really, really bad panic attack, and see what they fixed me up with. A little something to calm the nerves, nerves that feel like they have never known a moment's peace.

This is not the way someone who has been clean and sober for nearly a year should think, but I couldn't shake the compulsion that I should put something into my body to take away what I didn't want to feel.

I fried three eggs in too much butter and ate them too fast, before they'd had a



CLAIRE CRONIN

I didn't want to see severed heads and crushed limbs and pieces of broken glass smashed into someone's face.

chance to cool. I went after them the way I used to go after booze, especially when agitated or upset.

I am, I think, a fairly timid person. I sit at a desk all day and write, and then I come home at night and write some more. I am confrontation averse (though my wife might get a chuckle out of that). I have stayed in bad relationships too long and avoided ugly truths about my life as a matter of course. I am, more often than not, content with the status quo even when the status quo is all kinds of fucked up.

But when that truck flipped over, I took action, and even if that action was risky, stupid, pointless, or a combination of all three, I tried to help, which is more than what

most people driving home on the freeway that rainy night can say. How messed up is it that when a truck flips over in the rain, our first thought is "I'm going to have to Google that later" or maybe click on a television and consume a broadcast version of the story all the while telling friends and family "I saw a gnarly accident" or "I was there" when in truth we weren't there and we didn't witness a goddamn thing. I was a shadow on the side of the road to those thousands of people, nothing more.

But I don't blame them either. We all deal with things differently. I am not the same person I was a year ago. Today, I choose to get out of the car. Today, I choose fried eggs. A year ago? Different choices. Different person.

So when the paramedics asked me if I'd seen anything, I didn't tell them the kid had been driving way too fast. I just shook my head. More rain fell. More cars roared past. I went home burrito-less, booze-less, and soaking wet, and when I pulled into my parking space, the phone rang. It was the number the kid had called earlier. It was another kid, one of his friends, maybe. He wanted to know where the truck was, where the kid had lost control, so I told him. "Thank you," he said. "Thank you so much."

—Jim Ruland



MONSTER OF FUN

AMY ADOYZIE

**“Headphones
and nothing
to listen to.”**

Earning Keep

Everything I have, I earned,—or stole, or happened upon, or was gifted. I don’t have much, but I have more than enough. I have luxuries and burdens; running shoes and weak knees; headphones and nothing to listen to; values and ethics and apathy.

I used to be the most optimistic person, but years of volunteer and non-profit work has made me stop caring. I earned my cynicism.

Everything I have, I earned. I earned this unrelenting ache, this massive cloud that fogs my light, this absence of hope—a hollow, cavernous space.

* * *

Even in this dismal economy, I managed to earn a part-time job with health insurance. I had not seen a doctor in five years and I earned my first physical of the decade. The doctor asked about my family’s health history and I told her what I knew: diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer. These were measurable in numbers and X-rays. Doctors need to know this history of afflictions because these diseases may be embedded in the double helix that makes up my DNA. We need to know this in order to prevent undue suffering, so that we may earn a pass to avoid the same fate.

It’s frightening, isn’t it? To know that there are things about us that we could know, about the very fabric of how we are built, but don’t. Like how I realized that I knew nothing about the history of mental health that shaped and molded the crevices and bumps of my brain. Like how I had to answer, “I don’t know” when I sat across from my therapist, at my first counseling session ever, after he asked if anyone in my family had mental health issues.

I don’t know. I don’t know because we don’t talk about these things. We don’t talk about the days where the core of your chest feels like it’s been packed in mud. We don’t talk about the days where the idea of talking, of holding a mere

conversation, feels like an exhausting obstacle. We don’t talk about the days where we think about how we exist, and how much we want to cease existing, but continue to exist for the sake of our families and friends.

In that moment, I felt I was beginning to understand my father; a reticent man who I thought should have never had children. He was undoubtedly troubled, but did not speak about it. In that moment, I realized that I better understood my father now because of pain. He suffered it through his childhood and a war he never spoke of. I suffered it from the infinite expanse of optimism and hope that blackened into a mound of coal. We saw things, experienced things. They changed us, hardened us, formed calluses and cynicism in parts of us that used to be soft and naïve.

Perhaps this whole ordeal had been written in my genetic code—this depression and anxiety. I still don’t know, but I want to be comforted in thinking that maybe I understand where I’m from and how I am supposed to be to try to avoid the same fate.

* * *

Here’s what happened, in the only metaphor-ridden way I can explain it. My heart used to pound hope through my veins. I thrived on it—on red blood cells bursting with purpose and goodwill. I charged ahead with a smile and righteousness. My head was in the clouds, floating above it all, looking directly into the sun.

Then the sun burnt my retinas. It made me see and know things. It exposed the gaping faults of much of what I had believed in. I saw it in people, in Americans, in Bangladeshis, in Chinese. I saw their misguided attempts and misplaced principles, a system run on public relations photo ops that glossed over the infinite misery of our human experience.

You know that cliché: The bigger they are, the harder they fall? I didn’t just fall, I was yanked down. My head in the clouds, floating from the euphoria of my own high-mindedness when I was shot back down to earth—where there’s dirt and ugliness and humanity. I fell hard, and while I was down, I got kicked around a bit too. I learned too much about façades versus realities, and I wanted so badly to unlearn it.

You donate your time, experience, and cash to non-profit or non-governmental organizations under the premise that you are helping to alleviate suffering. It makes you feel better, your heart beats a little lighter, and you feel proud. When you sit down at a bar, order one too many drinks and pass out on the sidewalk around the corner from the late-night food carts—you don’t feel too much like a louse because, at the very least, you helped out some brown people on the other side of the planet. And then you don’t have to think about it anymore; you did your part.

We don’t think about how for every altruistic act and humanitarian effort that may succeed, there are dozens of lives and unfinished projects that were neglected and abandoned. We don’t think about the salaries of executive directors, the egos of founders, or the ghettos brimming with well-meaning volunteers. I didn’t think of it, and then it became all I could think of after I saw it.

We did our part, so we’re done thinking about it. We write our songs, pump our clenched fists, sing loudly to small rooms, to our own piddly choirs. We wear black hoodies and bandanas and call ourselves anarchists without recognizing how much of a first-world privilege it is to even be able to utter those words. We put out records, get Fest AIDS, and seldom question the vapidness of our own subculture. Because we’re done thinking about it. I didn’t think of it, and then it became all I could think of after I saw it.

* * *

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IN MY LATE TEENS, I WAS HOMELESS, DRUG-ADDLED, AND OBSESSED WITH MS PAC MAN.



MY STUPID LIFE
BY MITCH CLEM • WATERCOLORS BY NATALIE ANANDA

SEEKING SOLACE INDOORS, SAFE FROM THE BRUTAL MINNESOTA WINTER, I'D MADE IT MY PECULIAR MISSION TO ACHIEVE THE HIGH SCORE ON EVERY MS PAC MAN MACHINE IN DULUTH.



A MISSION I PROUDLY ACCOMPLISHED.

ONE DAY, I DROVE DOWN TO SEE THE BLUE MEANIES PLAY AT THE FOXFIRE COFFEE LOUNGE (R.I.P.) IN MINNEAPOLIS.



THE SOUND GUY TOTALLY FUCKED UP THE MIX SO YOU COULDN'T HEAR THE VOCALS, HORNS, OR KEYBOARD OVER THE DEAFENING GUITAR. I WAS PRETTY BUMMED.



...BUT I DID GET THE HIGH SCORE ON THEIR MS PAC MAN MACHINE, AND LO, A DREAM WAS BORN:



MY NEW MISSION WAS TO TRAVEL THE COUNTRY, DOCUMENTING MY EXPERIENCES AS A ZINE. THE ULTIMATE GOAL TO ACHIEVE A HIGH SCORE ON A MS PAC MAN MACHINE IN EVERY STATE.



*OBVIOUSLY INSPIRED SOMEWHAT BY PETE JORDAN'S DISHWASHER ZINE

WHEN I FANTASIZED ABOUT THE IDEA, IT WAS A PHENOMENAL SUCCESS...



PEOPLE WOULD FLOCK OUT TO WHERE THEY KNEW I'D BE AND WATCH ME PLAY.



I'D PARTY WITH EVERY COOL BAND IN THE COUNTRY.



I'D FUCK EVERY CUTE, BE-SPECTACLED PUNK GIRL I COULD FIND.



I'D BECOME A PUNK ROCK SUPERHERO.



IT WAS A GREAT IDEA.

AN IDEA I'D NEVER FOLLOW THROUGH ON, OF COURSE, OPTING INSTEAD TO SIT AROUND, DOING DRUGS IN MY CAR AND FANTASIZING ABOUT A BETTER LIFE.



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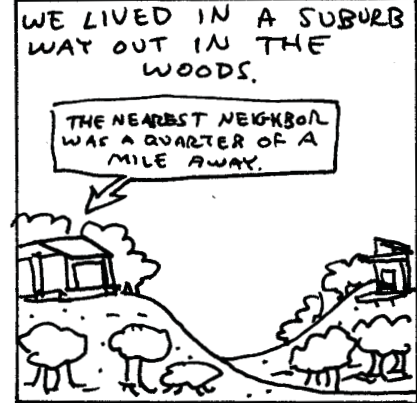


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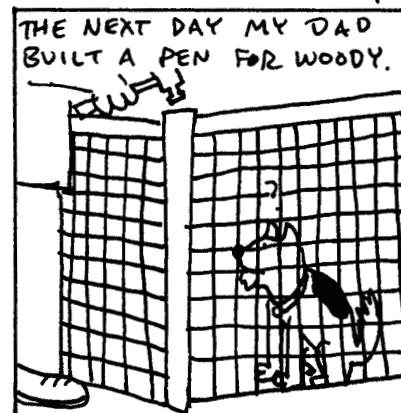


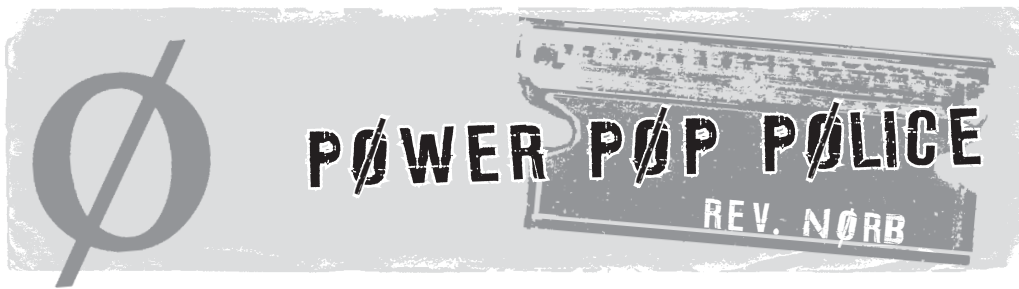
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*THIS WAS BEFORE CALLER I.D. OR *69





**“In unison,
Hüsker Dü yell
‘GET THE FUCK
OUT OF THE VAN!!!’”**

**“I SMELL LIKE GRANT FROM HÜSKER DÜ”
“DO YOU REMEMBER? ER, NEVER MIND”**

So anyway, like most geriatric punk fucks of the New Modern Era®, i spend a lot of my time worrying about shit involving aging and the general ravages of time, like *“What happens if a degenerative neurological condition someday causes me to lose control of my hands, and I start forcefully and repeatedly swatting myself in the balls, thru no cognitive volition on my part, over and over again, like unto a particularly malodorous handball game, even though it really hurts and turns my nether regions a generally off-putting blueberry hue, further marginalizing my already presumably heavily marginalized chances to Cruise and Swing with the Foxes?”* Other times, when i’m singing a mildly more cheerful tune in the saddle, however, i am only troubled by epistles of more the following tenor: *“Am i still punker than the dumb punker fuckers i used to pal around with back when we were younger, dumber, punker fuckers?”* I mean, what the hell—a codger like myself surely can’t be reasonably arsed to be punker than some kid who’s like a half or a third of my age—but yet, i think it’s fairly reasonable to hold myself to a high enough standard whereby i remain, at bare minimum, punker than the dudes i used to drink beer with on Saturday afternoons twenty or thirty years ago. It’s true: Whenever i meet one of the Old Gang, i let loose with a cold, appraising stare of Residual Punkness Detection, mentally taking stock of all areas where my subject’s punkness may be diminished from my own—you know, tell-tale signs of Encroaching Normalcy like beige pants, TV weatherman haircuts, footwear not named after basketball players from the 1910’s, etc. And so it came to pass that, on one recent Friday night, i double-bagged my Depends™ and lit out to some random bar in De Pere, WI ((home of Miss America 1973, future New Christy Minstrel Terry Anne Meeuwesen!)) to go see ((former Hüsker Dü drummer, 1973 Miss America runner-up)) Grant Hart. **MY GOAL FOR THE EVENING: ASCERTAIN MYSELF PUNKER THAN GRANT HART.** I mean, it’s not MUCH of a goal, but, dammit, it’s a start! Now, i’ll surely grant ((har)) you that Grant Hart was punker than i was when our bands used to play together in the eighties, but i think i can make a decent case for gaining some ground on him in the

nineties and the twenty-teens A.D. I think it’s anybody’s ball game. My projections for how the evening is destined to shake out go something like this: I’ll get to the club and i’ll find Grant, who will look exactly like the last time i saw him, even though that was like twenty years ago or something ((as opposed to the first time i saw him, which was more like twenty-seven years ago, when our bands played together at the Wil-Mar in Madison and he told me how he was starting a band with Dez Cadena and Chuck Dukowski of Black Flag and they were called “Black Dü Arkansas” and the only song they knew was “Sweet Home Alabama,” which, for years, gave me the erroneous impression that it was, in fact, Black Oak Arkansas who did “Sweet Home Alabama” which obviously makes no sense whatsoever)). I’ll say something casual and endearing, like *“hey Grant! It’s Nørb!”* and then he will go *“Hey Nørbie!!! How ya doin’?!”* Then i will give him a CD and he will go *“hey, thanks man!”* and get up on stage and play some kind of unplugged song that the Pixies would probably like, and i will weigh this data, and decide i am currently punker than Grant Hart, and then i will have two beers and go home ((probably happy)) ((my favorite all-time Hüsker Dü story was when we were divvying up the money outside in the Hüskers’ van after that show—the evening’s amassed funds totaled a whopping \$192, which needed to be split between the Hüskers, my band [[Suburban Mutilation]] and my buddy Marky’s band NO. So anyway, me and Marky get to go into their van, and we’re still in high school, so we’re all like awe-struck or whatever that we get to be in HÜSKER DÜ’S REAL-LIVE VAN, and Greg Norton, being older and slicker, puts us on the spot by asking what we feel is a fair split of the money. I swallow hard [[so to speak]] and bravely go “well, how ‘bout you guys take fifty percent, and we’ll each take twenty-five?” Greg counters with “or...how about we take a hundred, and you guys split what’s left?” [[if you’ll do the math, you’ll see that Greg’s shrewd financial negotiations landed the band all of FOUR DOLLARS MORE than my original suggestion. You go, Greg]] This seems reasonable, i guess, but, DAMMIT ALL ANYWAY, that silver-tongued Greg Norton just slickered me out of two dollars, and i am not quite ready to run

up the white flag just yet! Noticing two twelve-packs of Old Milwaukee™ behind the driver’s seat of the van [[which, being seventeen years of age, i am quite unable to obtain legally at this time]], i make my final, bold counter-offer: “How ‘bout you take a hundred, we take what’s left...AND a twelve-pack?” I begin to reach for the Old Milwaukee™. **IT IS MY DESTINY!** In unison, Hüsker Dü yell “GET THE FUCK OUT OF THE VAN!!!” and i quickly find myself unceremoniously booted to the Madison sidewalk. Well, maybe you had to have been there)). I arrive at the club at 10:30 PM, as i have been told that that’s when Grant goes on, and i have no interest in seeing either of the opening bands because they have dumb names. However, I HAVE BEEN DECEIVED!!! I have arrived just in time to—*wholly against my will!*—catch ((GASP!)) the **SECOND-TO-THE-LAST BAND!!! IT’S AN OUTRAGE I TELL YOU!!!** The band—The Wild Birds—are actually quite good, and two or three songs into the set i realize that the drummer is none other than my friend Jon, who was the drummer in my Bob Dylan tribute band, NØB DYLAN & HIS NOBSOLETES. Out of the corner of my eye, i spot a dude in a sweater that is unmistakably an older, slimmer Grant. I sidle up to him as he watches the band. Deep conversation ensues. *“Grant?” “Yeah.” “Nørb!”* He gives me a very generic “hey” before turning back to the band. He has NO IDEA who i am. **I’VE JUST BEEN SNUBBED BY GRANT HART!!! AND I DIDN’T EVEN TRY TO LAY CLAIM TO HIS OLD MILWAUKEE™ OR ANYTHING!!!** I slink away, embarrassed. The Wild Birds wrap up their set and put their bandanas away, so i go over to talk to Jon ((who, thankfully, remembers me)). Jon informs me that he was in Screeching Weasel for a year or so, where Weasel would make the band practice twenty-nine-song sets five hours a day for two straight weeks before touring. I chuckle inwardly at the ridiculousness of Weasel spilling all that ink in the 90’s proclaiming the irrefutable majesty of the twenty-two minute set—how any punk band who wanted to play longer than twenty-two minutes was a bunch of indulgent rock star lame-asses—and now he’s doing twenty-nine song sets. I dunno, man—maybe i’ve



ARMADILLO 2010

JASON ARMADILLO

just been snubbed by an ex-member of Hüsker Dü, but at least whatever i claimed was **RIGHTEOUS** and **TRUE** and **PUNKLY** ten or twenty years ago is still what i claim is **RIGHTEOUS** and **TRUE** and **PUNKLY** nowadays, kinda! Left to our own devices, Boris the Sprinkler always played a seventeen-song, forty-five minute set, so when we did a reunion show, we played a seventeen-song, forty-five minute set. *It was the right set length then, it's the right set length now!* We didn't play a twenty-two minute or a three hour reunion set, because **DAMMIT, WE GOT IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME!!!** **LET EON-TRAVERSING CONSISTENCY BE THE HALLMARK OF THE SUBLIMELY PUNKAZOIDAL SPIRIT!!!** Meanwhile, Grant and his arguably-tuned guitar are busy getting themselves thrown off the stage after calling a pack of departing female patrons his "lesbian sisters" after they failed to appreciate his offering of a toy propeller. I think this might have happened just before he started explaining what the colors of the opening act's bandanas used to mean at gay S&M bars, which somehow enraged the promoter to the point of chest-out, walking on stage **"YOU CAN'T TALK ABOUT MY FRIENDS**

THAT WAY" simmering meathead angst. The plug is eventually pulled, and, as people mill around in confusion and hostility, i once again attempt contact with Mr. Hart. Holding out a compact disc with the name **"REV. NØRB"** clearly emblazoned across the front, i say *"Grant, you're really pissing me off that you don't recognize me! It's Nørb, from SUBURBAN MUTILATION and SiCK TEEN!"* Grant stares blankly at the CD. I continue: *"Grant! It's pissing me off you don't remember me!"* to which i add, somewhat rudely, **"YA FREAK!!!"** "Well," he eventually mutters, *"this will give me something to listen to on the way to Milwaukee."* He takes the CD and walks away. He still has **NO CLUE** who i am. I am crushed. Not only am i **SO APPARENTLY LACKING** in punk cred that the guy who threw me out of his van in 1983 doesn't remember me, but **GRANT HART JUST GOT HIMSELF KICKED OFF THE STAGE IN DE PERE, OUTPUNKING ME BY A LONG SHOT!!!** I'm so un-punk i can barely get to the show in time to see the opening acts—meanwhile, Grant has got the promoter so pissed off he's threatening to beat him up! Looks like the answer to my question of **"ARE YOU PUNKER THAN GRANT**

HART" is a resounding **"NO!"** I shuffle off into the night, still smarting. Why **SURELY** you'd think he'd at least remember that time we played together in Oshkosh, when Hüsker Dü got the plug pulled on them because of the time Grant jumped up from behind his drumset, threw himself down on a table, pulled down his paisley pants, and pissed straight up in the air ((and, consequently, back down on himself))—in front of Rick Schoenecker's parents, no less. **A HA!!! STOP!!! HOLD THE PRESSES!!!** My new calculations indicate that Grant Hart is **NOT** punker than i am, as, by **NOT** throwing himself onto a table, pulling down his pants, and pissing straight up in the air tonight, he has **FAILED TO EXHIBIT THE EON-TRAVERSING CONSISTENCY WHICH IS THE HALLMARK OF THE SUBLIMELY PUNKAZOIDAL SPIRIT!!!** He's a **POSEUR!** A fair-weather urinator! I declare myself victor in this tilt, by virtue of my sheer perseverance and consistency trumping Grant's chastity, charity, prudence and hope! **TAKE THAT, WIZARD GLICK!**

Love,
Nørb



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I'VE BEEN FEELING REALLY
ALONE RECENTLY...



ALONE
IN MY
SOUL...

LIKE IT'S JUST ME...

BY
MYSELF...

...AND I HAVE NOWHERE
AND NO ONE TO TURN
TO...



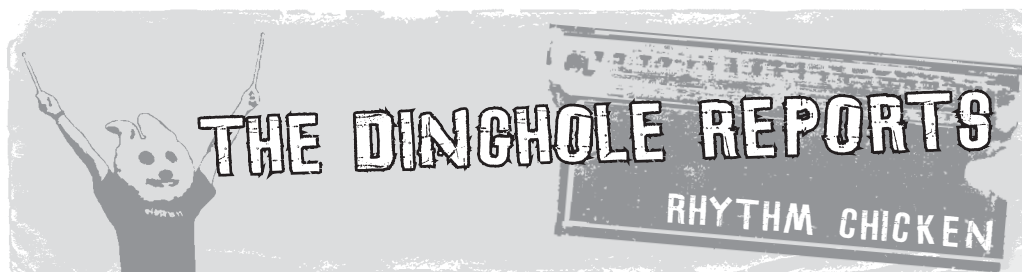
NO ONE.

I KEEP TELLING MYSELF THAT
THIS WILL PASS. THINGS WILL
GET BETTER...



BUT I'M STARTING NOT TO
BELIEVE MYSELF ANYMORE.





“I wasn’t sure if that was a tip or a bribe to quit, but I ceased nonetheless.”

Injury Benches the Rhythm Chicken!

The Dinghole Reports
By The Rhythm Chicken
(Commentary by Francis Funyuns)
[Edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

When last we spoke, I was bedridden in my trashy trailer in the northwoods of Wisconsin (Door County, to be more precise). Recently stricken with a herniated disc, I had spent an agonizingly boring three weeks on my living room futon, just laying there watching some occasional wildlife cross my yard. I was receiving weekly epidural shots (into the spine, right between the fourth and fifth vertebrae) and adhering to my strict doctor’s orders of bed rest. When I did get up to hobble around, it was rather pathetic. I had no stamina and my right leg would soon flare up in a most uncomfortable swollen-feeling. I guess I was in recovery mode.

(Holy Shicken! Injury benches the Rhythm Chicken! Are you out for the season? – F.F.)

These were the three worst weeks of my life. All I could do was lie there alone in the trailer and watch traffic pass by on the highway or the occasional deer or turkey in my yard. The necessity of my medical treatment made me miss my flight to Las Vegas, to my winter home in Boulder City. I racked up a \$278 cell phone bill that month, not to mention the near \$5,000 in hospital bills (Yup! No insurance!). I’ve never been so physically incapable in my life. Ruckus-raising I ain’t!

[No ruckus? Well, I hope you have SOMETHING to report here today besides the details of your current handicap! – Dr. S.]

Sooooooo, December 3rd I had Captain Zack drive me down to Appleton where I finally caught a new flight to Las Vegas. I escaped Wisconsin a mere twelve hours before the winter’s first major blizzard! My back twitches in pain just thinking about all that shoveling... AND I ACTUALLY LOVE SHOVELING SNOW! Now I’m residing

with my Main Hen (who doubles as a nurse in such situations!) here in Boulder City, Nevada, about twenty miles outside of Las Vegas. You would think I’d be able to roust up some wild-ass rhythm rock, being in such close proximity to the entertainment capitol of the world. Unfortunately, I am not physically capable to do much more than my morning stretches, a short walk around town, and then my new job I luckily picked up.

(Well, THIS is a sad sad state. There you are, next to SIN CITY, and the wildest antics you can muster up are a lazy stroll around town? What is this going to be? Some kind of pedestrian report from a quiet desert town? – F.F.)

[Really, Mr. Chicken. I would think you could at least rustle up some type of bogus parade story, or something... ANYTHING. – Dr. S.]

Well, my first two-and-a-half weeks were really rather tame. I would sleep, stretch, walk, cook, eat, and sleep, day after day after day. My job was simple, just heal. My boredom was then put aside for an eleven-day trip back to the Midwest! My Main Hen brought me to her Chicago family’s home for the holidays. I got to speak Polish with her *babcie* (grandma) and visit some cool Polish businesses. We even braved the blizzard conditions to zip up to Milwaukee for a night of barley pops with Ruckus O’Reily! Now we’ve been back here in the desert for a month, and I’m STILL not quite up to proper physical condition for dispensing audio ruckus to the Nevadans.

(Well, Mr. Herniated Beak, here we are 580 words into this column, and you’re telling us that you have NO RUCKUS to report? Razorcake HQ is not going to like this. – F.F.)

[Not even a parade gig or some stupid maritime gig? Nothing? – Dr. S.]

Dinghole Report #112: Unintentional Three-Bar Farewell Tour!

(Rhythm Chicken sightings #457, #458, and #459)

Lucky for me, I always have a healthy list of unreported ruckus sessions to draw from! This particular Saturday night was a few weeks after the official end of the tourist season in Door County, WI (about one week before my most unfortunate disc herniation). My friend Josh was throwing a surprise birthday party for his girlfriend Jen at a bar in Ellison Bay, quite possibly the QUIETEST small town in all of northern Wisconsin... until this night! With Dr. Phil and Ruckus Ryan as my crew, we stealthily snuck my chickenkit into the back room of the bar through the kitchen entrance. Then, sheer mayhem ensued as I unleashed my audio onslaught of birthday ruckus! Folks piled into the noisy back room and cheered! The birthday girl posed for a photo with the little drummer boy... er, chicken. My crew and I were handed some cold brews as the party progressed.

Then, it occurred to me that I had a fine crew and the night was young! Now was a perfect time to remind the county that the Chicken does indeed LIVE! We threw the rickety kit back into my car and zipped south to Sister Bay. At the main intersection, we turned right and parked at Husby’s Tavern. There were a few locals and a few late tourists inside drinking and listening to Alan Jackson. We set up my weapons just inside the front door, effectively blocking any ins and outs! Then I sat at the helm and erupted my molten chaos all over their faces! Alan Jackson was silenced as every head in the place turned to witness Sister Bay’s bastard son! He may be a freak, but he’s OUR freak! After a small and strangely polite applause, the bartender handed me a Pabst tallboy for a job well done.

My crew helped me quick run my rusty old kit across the street to the Sister



DAN "THE EGGMAN" EGGERT

He may be a freak, but he's OUR freak!

Bay Bowl. Many a Chicken gig has graced this historical bowling alley, and tonight would be no different! I left my half-drunk PBR outside of Husby's front door and entered the Bowl. It certainly felt like a "shoe rack night." It's always been a trusty stage in this particular venue. One single person was bowling that night, and about six people were sitting around the bar. I love the quiet season! My ruckus exploded like a turkey in the tenth! I put everything I had into that gig. I pounded my kit to within an inch of its life (again!). My sonic sewage echoed across all six lanes! Eddy at the bar let out a heartfelt "HOOOT!" Then one of the owners came up to me and pushed a ten-dollar bill into

my wing. "THE BEAST IS PAID OFF!" I wasn't sure if that was a tip or a bribe to quit, but I ceased nonetheless. We had a birthday party to get back to, not to mention a half-full PBR tallboy!

Sister Bay felt like New York City compared to the quiet murmurings of Ellison Bay. Back at Jen's birthday party, my crew and I told tales of our most untamed ruckus in lands to the south. About one week later, I lay in a puddle of my own sweat in bed, wincing in constant pain. With no warning signs, no apparent reason, and no health insurance, I had a herniated disc with a serious case of sciatica.

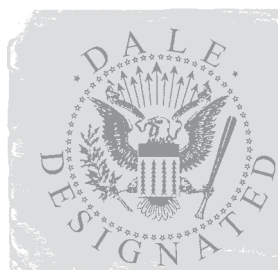
All I wanted was a Pepsi.

(Oh boy. Here we go again, more whining about his schmerniated schmisc. I can't listen anymore. - F.F.)

[As a doctor, I must advise you to instigate some REAL ruckus soon, or your condition may NEVER improve! - Dr. S.]

All I wanted was a Pepsi.

-Rhythm Chicken
rhythmchicken@hotmail.com



I'M AGAINST IT

DESIGNATED DALE

“Let there
be rock.”

A!C!/D!C!

This past February 19 marked the thirtieth anniversary of an untimely and unfortunate death of one of the most down-to-earth frontmen in rock'n'roll: Ronald Belford Scott, better known to AC/DC heads worldwide as Bon Scott. Now, before anyone in the room starts to roll their eyes and breathe heavy sighs, do me a favor and take off one of your filthy socks and shove it into that gaping maw of a mouth for a few minutes. Not only do I intend to triumph the memory of Brother Scott, but, hopefully, everyone who's not in the know of the early years of AC/DC can get a better understanding and gain some appreciation of one of the hardest working bands on the worldwide touring circuit. AC/DC has been pigeonholed as heavy metal by critics and non-fans alike for many years, but if one gave AC/DC a thorough and honest listen (especially the band's earlier discography), they'd find that AC/DC is one hell of a rock'n'roll band, the same way Motörhead is (who have also endured the same type of scrutiny over the years).

Like Groundskeeper Willie, Bon was born the true Scotsman in Kirriemuir, Scotland on July 9, 1946, where his father Charles Scott worked in the family bakery and was also in the local bagpipes band. When Bon was six years old, his family decided to trek southward to Sunshine, a small suburb in Melbourne, Australia. Legend has it that around this time Scott got stuck with the nickname “Bon” while he was in elementary school. Because he was from “bonnie Scotland” and there was already another Ronald in his class, the name permanently stuck from then on.

In 1956, Bon Scott's family moved again to Fremantle, Western Australia, a small port town near Perth. It was here that Bon joined the Fremantle Scots Pipe Band, learning to play bagpipes and drums. It was also here that Bon's rock'n'roll attitude was starting to take shape as a teen. He dropped out of school at the age of fifteen to take on a number of jobs: on a crayfishing boat out of Fremantle, in a market garden driving a tractor, at the egg board as a store man, and as an apprentice at Avery Scales as a weighing machine mechanic (where he was awarded First Year Apprentice of the Year and was noted an extremely diligent worker). Soon after his time in the workforce, that same rock'n'roll attitude started kicking into high gear and transpired into the beginnings of a true rock'n'roll lifestyle.

Bon ended up doing a short stretch in Fremantle Prison's assessment center, followed by nine months at the Riverbank Juvenile Institution after being found guilty of an assortment of delinquencies, including giving a false identification to the police, escaping legal custody, having unlawful “carnal knowledge,” and stealing twelve gallons of gasoline. Following his stint at Riverbank, Scott attempted to join the Australian Army but was rejected for being “socially maladjusted.” And so it began.

1964: At eighteen years old, Bon scrapped together his very first band, The Spektors, a beat-influenced band playing the popular sound at the time. Transferring his honed chops over from the years of playing with the local pipes band, Bon was the Spektors' drummer and occasionally sung. The Spektors then started to play some local gigs around town, including the Medina Youth Centre and surf clubs. Perth radio stations 6PR and 6KY also started to slot them as area faves.

A few years later, the music bug bit hard and Bon started to get serious about his music career. He and Vince Lovegrove, another well-known Fremantle musical hotshot, formed The Valentines, which was a conglomeration of the three biggest beat bands in the Perth area at the time (The Spektors, The Wintzons, and Ray Hoff And The Off Beats). The band started picking up quickly and, early the following year, The Valentines played to their biggest crowd of three-thousand screaming teenagers at the Perth Supreme Court Gardens *Torch Bearers for Legacy* concert.

In May 1967, they released their first single, *Every Day I Have to Cry*. It made it to number five in the Western Australian charts and it all was starting to gel (look up The Valentines' version of “Build Me Up Buttercup” on YouTube—you won't believe your eyes—yes, that's Bon on the right). June 12 was their lucky break and the pivotal meeting that would eventually link Bon to his future AC/DC bandmates. The Valentines played a support slot for The Easybeats at His Majesty's Theatre in Perth. This was the exact time when Bon's professional relationship started with George Young of The Easybeats. George is the older brother of Malcolm and Angus Young. He was half of the Vanda and

Young production team at Albert Productions (remember this production team for later), responsible for many of AC/DC's seminal classics. Later that year, The Valentines soon snagged a record contract and moved to Melbourne where there were bigger gigs, bigger crowds, and much more opportunity to further their success.

After a few years, The Valentines eventually broke up. In August 1970, Bon joined some Sydney-based, folksy-keyboard-jazzy outfit called Fraternity, where he was the lead vocalist and played a (gulp!) recorder. You can also YouTube Fraternity if you'd like, but let it be said here that I did warn you (yikes, indeed). Bon and Fraternity moved back to Adelaide, South Australia (where the band was originally from) and went on to release a couple of full lengths and some singles. The band had some pretty good success in their native Australia, getting some choice shows under their belts with Black Sabbath and even opening up for The Killer himself, Mr. Jerry Lee Lewis.

In 1972, they went to England with hopes of garnering some bigger success, but in the U.K., things were really not happening, with the exception of playing with the rocking Status Quo. In early 1973, the band tried changing its name to Fang (not to be confused with the 1981 NoCal punk rock band with the same name. How 'bout Fangternity? Should've tried that name—kinda catchy, no?). By mid-1973, the group had hit a big hiatus wall, and then gradually splintered.

In early 1974, Bon returned back to Adelaide and got a day job loading trucks at the Wallaroo fertilizer plant. Some of his recent band members formed a loosely-knit act called the Mount Lofty Rangers, with whom Bon kept in close contact and recorded a couple of vocal tracks. It was right around this time that Scott was involved in a near-fatal, head-on accident on his motorcycle (after speeding away from a bar after getting into a fight with one of his pals) and was in a coma for three days.

Later on in 1974, Bon had been working as a driver in Adelaide. It was at this point that he met (by way of his old Valentines bandmate, Vince Lovegrove) the touring members of AC/DC, including brothers Angus and Malcolm Young. At that time, AC/DC's lead singer was the ridiculous Dave Evans (again, see YouTube), and the Young



Scott attempted to join the Australian Army but was rejected for being “socially maladjusted.” And so it began.

brothers were deciding that Evans was not a suitable singer for the group, being that he exhibited more of a Gary Glitter stage vibe. Soon after becoming AC/DC's driver, Bon expressed his interest in becoming their drummer, but the band kept telling him they didn't need a drummer; what they needed more than anything was a singer.

Scott taking over vocal duties for AC/DC in September 1974 was the most natural progression for the band. So natural, in fact, that the band released two Australian-only full lengths in 1975: *High Voltage* in February (that took only ten days to record) and *T.N.T.* in December through Albert Productions. (I told you to remember this production team

earlier.) After scoring a well-deserved deal with Atlantic, *High Voltage* was released internationally (with songs from both their first two Aussie releases) on May 14, 1976, less than a month after the Ramones' debut record. The band hit the European tour circuit running, playing support slots for some of the '70s heavy hitters at the time like Black Sabbath (yet again), Cheap Trick, and KISS.

Hot on the heels of the European cult success of their international debut, the band got back into the studio to lay down the thudding *Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap* LP, again as an Aussie-only release through Albert Productions in September 1976, and then internationally on Atlantic in December 1976, with a few song swap-outs on each album. Fueling their following even further with *Deeds*, AC/DC fanned the flames even higher with their hard-hitting *Let There Be Rock* album, once more released as an Aussie-first record through Albert Productions in March 1977, then through the international Atlantic channels in June 1977. This third album was the last of the band's to be first released solely in Australia (in case any vinyl junkies are wondering).

1977 also brought the first U.S. live exposure to AC/DC, playing at the Capitol Theater in Flint, MI. The supporting act was the almighty MC5, which had briefly reunited and agreed to do the gig. AC/DC had finally cracked their cult status and broke the American mainstream (by the industry's standard, that is). To be at that gig in Michigan—a wall of sound that would gladly make my ears bleed!

May 1978 saw the release of the much-underrated *Powerage*, a record that seems to be a fave of many other bands, with its rollicking cuts that slap you in the face with the band's trademark riffs. Such a great full-length.

1979's *Highway to Hell*, the eternally-classic LP—that many consider to be one of the band's finest moments—plays more like a greatest hits collection than it does their sixth and final LP they did with Bon Scott. On February 19, 1980, Scott passed out after a night of heavy drinking in London and was left inside a car owned by an acquaintance named Alistair Kinnear. Bon was found dead the following afternoon. He was only thirty-three years old. The cause of death was pulmonary aspiration (choked to death by one's own vomit), the same way John Bonham went just seven months later. I can't stress enough just how fucking wonderful those first six AC/DC records are; I really can't. Let your ears convince the rest of your heart, that's all I can say. The band may still live on and continue to thrive, but that Bonnie Scotsman is still sorely missed, even after thirty years of his passing.

Cheers, Bon.

And thanks.

—Designated Dale
designateddale@yahoo.com



**You can't punish
what you can't catch!**



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Online Independent Vinyl One Stop

Its me again, Analog Boy. My parents caught on to my little bribe from the last ad, but they have yet to catch me! So while I'm still on the loose, use coupon code RAZOR55 to save FIFTEEN PERCENT on all orders and keep my parents distracted!

LABELS/BANDS/ETC.: WE WANT PROMO STUFF FOR ORDERS, YOU WANT FREE ADVERTISING - LET'S WORK TOGETHER!

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BECAUSE YOU'VE HAD IT WITH THE FART JOKES

TIPPING IS NOT MANDATORY. IF THE SERVICE IS TERRIBLE LEAVE A LIGHT TIP OR NO TIP AT ALL.*



*JUST BEAWARE THIS GUARANTEES EVEN WORSE SERVICE NEXT TIME

THE PERCENTAGE FOR TIPPING IS NOT A SET RULE. WHEN ORDERING IN A BAR OR NIGHTCLUB SETTING BE PREPARED TO TIP \$1. PER DRINK.



COMICS W/ MATH = NO FUN

SOMETIMES PEOPLE ARE JUST A LITTLE TOO COOL FOR SCHOOL TO BE CAUGHT TIPPING. THEY WILL MAKE UP ANY EXCUSE TO BE CHEAP.



YOU SHOULD TIP WHEN USING DRINK TICKETS. THE HOUSE PAID FOR YOUR DRINK NOT THE SERVER.



F.Y.I. DRINK TICKETS DON'T HAVE BUILT IN TIPS THAT MAGICALLY GO INTO TIP JARS.

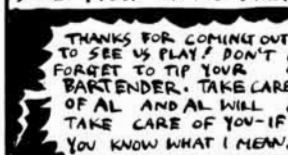
JUST BECAUSE YOU ARE THE ENTERTAINMENT DOESN'T EXCLUDE YOU FROM TIPPING.



DEAR BANDS, WE KNOW YOU HAVE BARELY ENOUGH DOUGH FOR GAS TO GET TO THE NEXT TOWN...



BUT IF YOU DON'T WANT TO WAIT 20 MINUTES FOR THAT WELL DRINK AT LEAST GIVE YOUR SERVER SOME PROPS ON THE MIC.



ALSO GIVE THEM FREE CO'S +

TIP IF YOU PARK YOUR SOBER ASS IN A SEAT ALL NIGHT TO SEE A BAND. THAT SEAT WOULD HAVE HAD A DRINKER WHO SPENT MONEY + TIPPED IF IT WASN'T FOR ALL YOUR VEGAN FRIENDLY PURSES + COATS PILED MILE HIGH TO CLAIM IT YOU ARE TAKING POTENTIAL LIVELYHOOD AWAY FROM DECENT SERVERS. YOUR TIP SHOWS YOU UNDERSTAND AND WILL COMPENSATE THE SERVER FOR THEIR TROUBLES. DESIGNATED DRIVERS ARE EXEMPT FROM THIS RULE.*



* F*CK YOU, DALE.

IF YOU SAY YOU JUST CAN'T AFFORD TO TIP, I SAY YOU JUST CAN'T AFFORD TO GO OUT. BUY A SIX-PACK AT THE STORE AND GO DRINK IT AT HOME WHILE LISTENING TO 'BRIGHT EYES' BY YOURSELF



LOOK, I CAN'T MAKE YOU TIP. BUT MAYBE THE REASON YOU DON'T TIP IS SIMPLY BECAUSE NOBODY EXPLAINED HOW IT WORKS. THESE ARE NOT ALL THE RULES BUT A INTRO FOR DRINKING OUT. THIS HAS BEEN A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT ON BEHALF OF BARTENDERS AND SERVERS EVERYWHERE YOU GO.





GUEST COLUMNIST

DAVE WILLIAMS

**“This is when,
predictably,
shit got dicey.”**

PUNKER THAN YOUR ZINE

I've always maintained that, while your typical punk rock histories seem to focus on a handful of well-worn metropolises and musical hotbeds, the big city environment and its cultural cross-pollination has been far more conducive to “individuality” than the hundreds of thousands of small towns scattered around the outskirts of the world's urban centers. It was in one of these towns, Greely, Ontario, Canada to be precise, that I spent the first twenty years of my life.

While our small circle of rustic misfits were obviously “cut from a different cloth” from the get go, it wasn't until we discovered *Never Mind the Bollocks* by way of Nirvana that we found a suitable outlet for our relative peculiarity. And, like many other punk rockers of our age group (who had the pleasure of coming of age in the mid '90s), we shortly thereafter discovered Green Day, and then Screeching Weasel, and you know the rest—I know a lot of you share a similar musical timeline, regardless of how uncool and cliché it may be.

Being the only punk rockers we knew in our entire township, we felt it our duty to dabble in every conceivable area of punkdom, beginning with the formation of our first band, SOI (Sounds Of Intensity or Social Outcasts Inc, depending on whom you asked). It wasn't long before myself and my two best friends, twin brothers Matt and Andrew, took a cue from the musical bibles we'd found in *Flipside* and *MRR* and decided it was high time to start our own zine.

Needless to say, as obnoxiously overconfident ninth-graders, our appearance alone (which was decidedly tame in retrospect, consisting mainly of army jackets, Epitaph or Fat Wreck band shirts, and shiny new Doc Martens) ruffled more than a few feathers as each day we strode cockily down the halls of our incredibly rural high school in Manotick, Ontario. The welcome disapproval of the other students planted a seed in my pubescent head that could only end in disaster: Our zine would be a fittingly arrogant, reactionary, and ill-advised tirade about a specific segment of our high school—the “alternative” seniors.

Allow me to explain.

Naturally, our newfound punkness instilled in us a pretty stern sense of

superiority, and thus nothing was more infuriating than these supposed leaders of our school traipsing around the smoking section in corduroy bell-bottoms and *Pablo Honey*-era Radiohead shirts. Particularly upsetting was the fact that the understood figurehead of these Lollapalooza-inspired faux-hippies, we'll call him “Shiloh,” had recently both accosted me publicly for scrawling Biafra on my army jacket (of course, I was ignorant of the Nigerian Civil War and was unaware of Shiloh's Nigerian ancestry—I merely assumed he was intimidated by my terribly fearsome attire and my pledged allegiance to the infamous Dead Kennedys frontman) and had published the inaugural issue of his first zine, *Solestar*, much to the delight of hackysacking morons throughout the township.

As the rabble-rouser spearheading our zine's creation, I thought it necessary to introduce it with a few lines attacking *Solestar* directly and, in turn, offending Shiloh and a sizeable majority of the student population. Upon finishing our project, complete with a “punk of the month” segment, reviews of records from before we were born, and breaking news in the form of fake correspondences with our favorite bands, the aptly titled *Punker Than Your Zine* was distributed amongst our circle of friends, the aforementioned slandering of *Solestar* garnering more than a few wicked chuckles.

This is when, predictably, shit got dicey.

It had come to our attention that, contrary to what we'd believed, we weren't the only punk rockers in our school, and that there was in fact a local punk band whose members could be found huddled regularly in the seniors-only smoking section we so fiercely loathed. After repeated high school hallway nods of approval in reference to each others' Good Riddance and Rancid shirts, we reluctantly began conversing with these older punks, taking a particular liking to Dan, the drummer of Crank, the band we'd heard much about but had yet to hear.

After a few weeks of back-and-forth have-you-heards and tape-trades between ourselves and the Crank guys, Nathan—another of our close friends and SOI drummer extraordinaire—took it upon himself to hand deliver a copy of *Punker Than Your Zine* to Dan, trusting that he'd be duly impressed

by our enthusiasm and vast knowledge of all things punk. We all agreed that this was a good idea, no matter how much I'd still like to blame Nathan for the shit storm that followed. You see, what none of us bothered to consider was the known fact that Dan was rather close friends with a certain shaggy-haired, tie-dye endorsing nemesis of mine—the vile, revered, contemptible Shiloh.

Within days of *PTYZ*'s release, school became inexplicably hazardous for the lot of us. We were shoved in the hallways, berated in the yard, and stared down in the cafeteria. We could not, for the life of us, understand what had inspired this significantly heightened aggression, and we merely assumed that our constant sneering and visible rebelliousness was finally doing the trick. Sadly, and deservedly, our short-lived source of newfound pride soured when one afternoon Nathan boarded his bus only to see Shiloh himself sitting at the back of the bus, perusing what was unmistakably a copy of *Punker Than Your Zine*, Issue #1.

It all made perfect sense. We were quick to point the finger at Nathan for assuring our doom, but we knew that we were all responsible. School days became increasingly perilous, with death threats and physical torment becoming more and more frequent. In great fear of the situation escalating, it was decided that Nathan should talk to Shiloh about the situation at hand, since they shared a school bus and Nathan had been a friend of Shiloh's younger brother Nick since kindergarten. Nathan begrudgingly agreed, but opted to talk to Nick instead. After Nathan explained the situation, Nick spoke to Shiloh, and then to Nathan again, who immediately called me.

“So, I have Shiloh's phone number, if you wanna call him. Nick thinks you should. I mean, it was you who wrote that part anyways, not me,” Nathan said to me, shakily.

He was right. I wrote it. My extensive history of running my mouth had come back around to chomp its teeth into my ass. I took down the number and then sat on the edge of the couch, gazing at the phone for what seemed like an eternity. And then I dialed. Shiloh answered. I explained who I was, and he seemed genuinely pleased to

hear from me. In my most mature tone I explained the situation and apologized sincerely... and repeatedly. One might even say I groveled a bit. It was not my proudest moment. Shiloh said he appreciated the call, and that while he wasn't exactly flattered by our remarks, he was impressed that we'd made a zine in the first place, seeing as *Solestar* was the only other one in school, and we were only in the ninth grade. The conversation ended pleasantly, and rarely had I felt more relieved.

Things would *have* to clear up now. We were pardoned. Shiloh had deemed it so. I called the other guys and explained every little detail. Sighs of relief were emitted. The school setting improved. Some tension still lingered, but as far as we could tell, everything was on the up and up. We brought ourselves to talk to the Crank guys again, and they acted as if none of it had ever happened. We couldn't have asked for anything more. A few days later, Dan handed us flyers for the upcoming school "band jam" and informed us that Crank would be playing. We assured him we'd be in attendance. The band jam was that Friday evening, and the rest of that week ran as smoothly as if we'd never committed the treason of slighting King Shiloh.

A group of us were dropped off outside our high school gym for the band jam by our friend Sarah's mom. Matt, Andrew, and Nathan met us there. A handful of our school's bands were scheduled to play that night, including Crank, a decent grunge-metal band, Dug, a terrible alternative rock band with the equally terrible moniker, Seven Leaf Dream, and headlining the evening would be everyone's favorite mellowed-out local superstars Slow Children Playing, fronted, of course, by Shiloh.

Confident that the whole zine mess had actually blown over, we were actually having a great time. Crank was incredible, and no one seemed to give us a second glance. Dug went on and the metal dudes were stoked. Seven Leaf Dream took the stage and no one was stoked. After 7LD concluded their painful and seemingly endless set, the curtains closed and people crowded the front of the stage for Slow Children Playing. Even I was slightly intrigued. The lights went on backstage, and the curtains slowly drew open. Simultaneously, our stomachs turned and our jaws dropped. A sea of faces turned to us and within seconds the gymnasium filled with furious shouts and wild laughter. Taped to the microphone stand, at center stage, was *Punker Than Your Zine*, Issue #1.

As the band began to play their very warmly received, amateurish brand of psychedelic rock, the very individuals who had recently refrained from shoving us in the halls and staring at us in the cafeteria were now spitting on us, whispering death threats in our ears, and throwing a bevy of fists and elbows in our direction as they danced. After enduring this torture for a couple of songs, the longest ten-ish minutes of our lives, the collective agreement was made that it would be a fine idea to get the fuck out of that gym. Sarah rushed to the phone and called her mom.

The short distance between Greely and Manotick seemed frightfully long that night, as we inched towards the exit with great panic and longed for our getaway car to arrive. Finally, Sarah gave word that her mom was pulling into the parking lot, and we tore out of the heavy double doors. Eight of us piled into a heaven-sent five-seat Buick that night, and with much shifting and lap-sitting, the car doors were finally closed and we drove out of the parking lot, accompanied by the jeers and curse words of many, including the final, biting hurrah: "Hey look, there goes a fucking clown car."

—Dave Williams



JACKIE RUSTED

**MY EXTENSIVE HISTORY
OF RUNNING MY MOUTH HAD
COME BACK AROUND TO CHOMP
ITS TEETH INTO MY ASS.**



SQUEEZE MY HORN GARY HORNBERGER

“Would Pee Wee ever return?”

Constant Rooting for the Underdog

In 1985, a bunch of the gang from work decided to waste one of our free nights going to the movies. Little did I know that the movie I would watch that night still stands today as one of my all-time favorites and involve its brainchild in a roller coaster career. That movie is *Pee Wee's Big Adventure*. Why comedies get no credit when it comes to doling out awards is beyond the realm of understanding. Let me ask this: when was the last time you heard someone quote lines from an action movie, a romance, or a dramatic winner? The answer would be not much more than one line. For instance, let's take *Titanic* as an example, other than, “I’m the king of the world,” what other line is remembered from that far-too-lengthy, high-budget movie? All I can hear are crickets chirp as I wait for an answer. That’s right. There are no others, but in a comedy one can go on and on.

Let me give some examples, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*—which the DVD/video guide gives two-and-a-half stars to—is, to this day, filled with one liners, most uttered by Sean Penn’s character alone. If you really want to hear memorable quotes, ask just about anybody whose seen *Caddyshack* (two stars) if they can recite some lines. You better make sure you’re willing to give up a good chunk of your time.

Now, where was I? *Pee Wee's Big Adventure*, that’s right. What could be better than Tim Burton directing the story of an over-grown kid on his quest to retrieve his stolen bike? As a kid, I’d had a bike stolen, so I could lament along with this character. With Pee Wee, it’s the constant rooting for the underdog. Now, granted, my mom would have kicked my ass if I tried to hitch rides with convicts or ghost truckers, jumped trains, or hung out in biker bars on a trip to the Alamo’s basement to get my bike back, but watching Pee Wee do it was fun and entertaining. The movie also starred Elizabeth Daily, who was considered hot by me at nineteen years old.

There was also the not-so-memorable *Big Top Pee Wee*, which was all right, but nothing compared to the first. Pee Wee then started a Saturday morning show based on his earlier work called *Pee Wee's Playhouse*. I never saw the show when it ran, but thanks to my wife’s obsession, I get to see it every time the nieces and nephew spend the night. It’s amazing that

it garnered awards as a kids’ show because there are a lot of sexual subtleties peppered throughout. But it’s also loud and noisy fun in the playhouse. There are a great many toys and visitors, so kids dig it.

Then just as everything was looking good, Pee Wee was found to have an alter-ego named Paul Reubens who likes to drink and hang out in porno theaters exposing himself to himself. So Reubens got some bad press, some jail time, some community service, and his show was yanked off the air. This all spelled the vanishing of Pee Wee Herman. For all the fans, this meant there would be no more Pee Wee. How could this happen?

Very simply, if you’re going to act like a kid, you’re going to have to act like a kid. Doing any of those grown-up things that make you feel good better be done in the privacy of your own home with the door shut, in a room with no windows. This was very bad for those of us, who loved/liked Pee Wee. For the next twenty some odd years we may have seen him twice with the hopes that there was a change of heart and the powers that be were going to allow him to make a return, but then there was nothing. We thought the real killer was when they raided Reubens’ home and found some art that was deemed pornographic. That case somehow dissipated in the court system. Would Pee Wee ever return?

I am happy to report, that Pee Wee is back! I don’t know how he kept that stick-like figure, but I saw his show at the Nokia Theatre and the man has not lost a step. The show was a colorful romp back to 1986. Based mainly on the *Pee Wee Herman Show* from 1981, the show has all the characters from the playhouse, with much of the original cast returning. Laurence Fishburne was too busy with *CSI*, but, apparently, stopped by to watch one night. He was aptly replaced by the guy who sprayed brains in the back seat in *Pulp Fiction*.

What more can be said about the story of a boy who gives up his wish to fly for his friends to hook up and, in the end, still gets to fly with the help of puppet arms and legs? It’s still funny some twenty years later. I also love the use of video from the fifties of the school kid who doesn’t want to be a Mr. Bungle, but gets the biggest frickin piece of

cake I’ve ever seen in a school lunch line. It was disappointing that Pee Wee didn’t comment on how large the cake was, like in the 1981 video.

It was a fun night, thanks to our friends Brett and Laine. Thanks to Laine who made me keep a secret for a month from my wife! I suck at keeping secrets! Now, unfortunately, they went back to see a second show that included a meet and greet afterward, but I was ill. I did, however, get the scoop that there should be another movie on the horizon. Let’s cross our fingers and hope it’s as great as *Big Adventure*.

I also found out that the stolen bike from the movie is in the Hollywood museum, so you all might want to check that out. So, in closing, I ask you movie goers to by pass *Avatar* and save your pennies for a good comedy that you can remember and feel good about. Thanks.

SUNDOGS #3

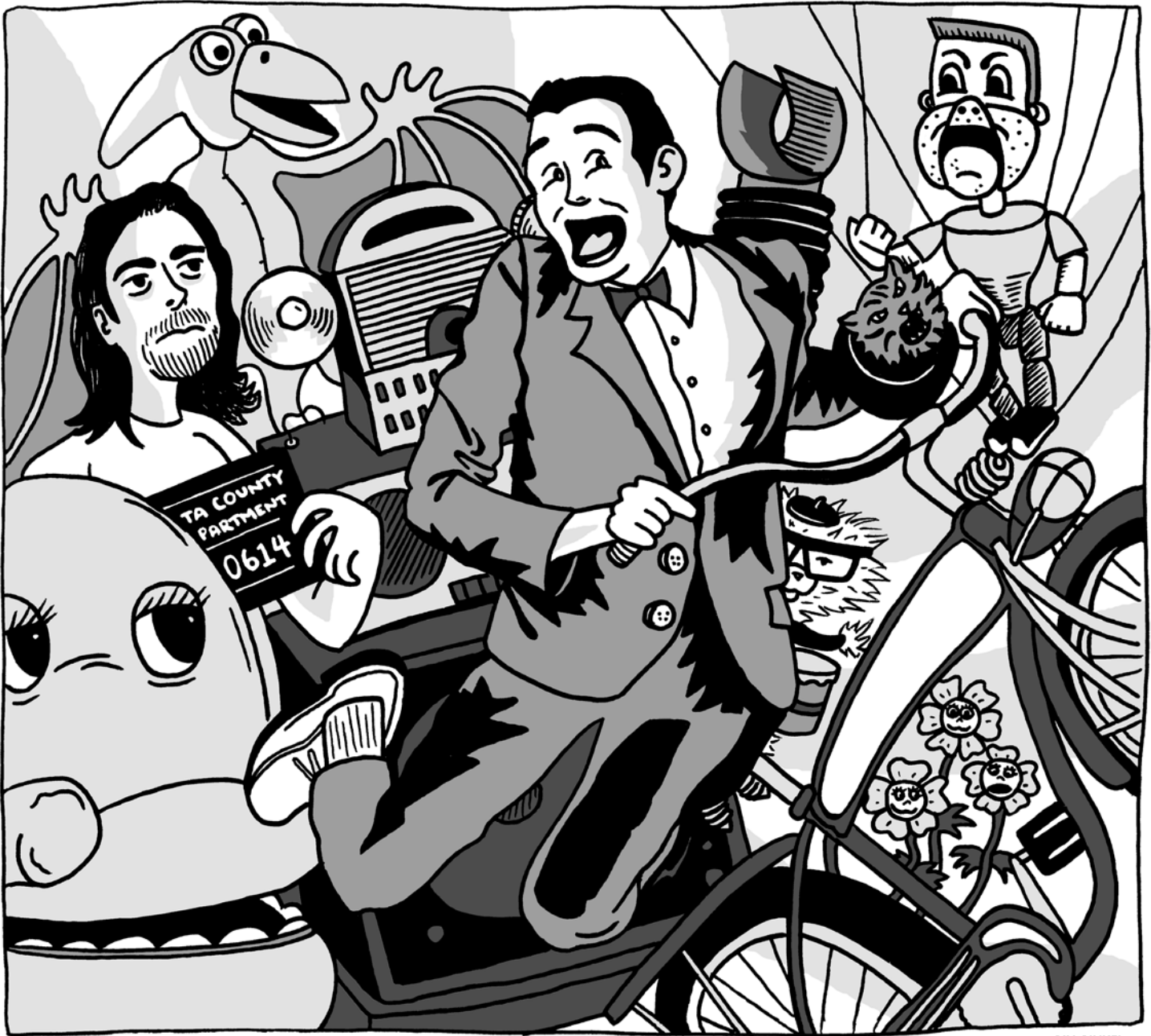
300 yen, ?? U.S., By Adam Pasion

It seems to be that *Sundogs* is the only comic that comes across my desk on a bi-monthly basis. I really like to see what goes on in Japan every two months. This is like reading Ben Snakepit, only with rhino beetles and sushi. It’s fun to read the ongoing autobiography of Adam, his wife Ami, their son Nemo, and a soon-to-be-new little addition to the family. This little comic gives a cool perspective of the blending of culture. It’s amazing how this guy survives in a foreign culture, accepting those beliefs, all the while still holding on to his western culture. It is also amazing that Adam has time to make this little book, considering all the other things he piles high on his plate. If you enjoy social experiment/high wire acts, then this is a great book to quench that thirst. (adam@biguglyrobot.net, www.biguglyrobot.net)

WORK FUNNIES, WORKIN HARD, HARDLY WORKIN

\$?, By Constance Taylor

Wow, what an interesting look at work! This little comic is so damn entertaining with its down-to-earth perspective on a woman in the work force. It’s very cool to see the simple-minded reactions to a woman mechanic from



BILL PINKEL

My mom would have kicked my ass if I tried to hitch rides with convicts or ghost truckers.

the perspective of that woman. My favorite portion of this book is the comparison of a day in the life of a mechanic and a topless dancer. One would think that they would be totally different, but after reading this, both suck (although I would think the pay day might be better on one). When everything is done at the end of the day, we find that our jobs are never finished. Yet, we all fall asleep on the couch or the arm chair. I really enjoyed this comic. I hope more is to come in the future because it's always fun see the unskilled idiot in the doorway trying to give

advice or offer help to someone who has the situation under control. (bigcavecomix@live.com, mspace.com/bigcavecomix)

TWENTYFOUR HOUR CHURCH OF ELVIS

\$??, By Kelly O'Grady

Remind me never to move to Portland! If this is the place to go after moving out, then this comic paints Portland as hell on earth. It was very difficult to get to the end of this book. The story line stalls and then moves and then stalls. And, I really don't

find chicken scratches to be a motivating art form. In reading these books, I'm always left wondering how people manage to make it by by just getting drunk and playing in garage bands. The only redeeming thing in this book is how the gift of language is given to animals and inanimate objects. If the writer would go with this, he might have something. What this comic needs is a bucket of wit, because without it, it's a drunken guy lying in the street. (skahobbit@yahoo.com)

—Gary Hornberger

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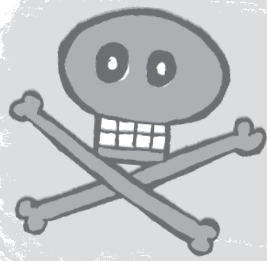


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SHIFTLESS WHEN IDLE

MADDY TIGHT PANTS

“My hair, MY SIGNATURE HAIR!”

Jay Reatard, RIP

It seems like the writers of obituaries have this compulsive need to make everyone's life into a nice story, with a good narrative arc, and an almost disturbingly natural conclusion. Like, “He lived fast, died young,” even though so many people live fast and still die old.

When the media found out that Jay Reatard had died, the obit writers got to work. “Jay had a sense of urgency. You could tell by how many bands he was in—the Reatards, the Lost Sounds, the Final Solutions, so many others. He hit it big right before he died. He was a musical genius. He loved to provoke people. He was sometimes a jerk. And, all things considered, this is how you'd expect the story to end up.”

At least that's what I read, in everything from newspapers in Memphis, where Jay lived for most of his twenty-nine years, to the *New York Times*. And maybe some of what they wrote was right. I don't know. I never met Jay. I was just another fan.

But the way I look at it, there's no narrative arc, really. There's just a collection of stories. Maybe some of them represent a larger truth. Maybe some of them don't.

And with Jay, there are so many stories. Alicja Trout remembers the time Jay bought some black hair dye. “He went in the bathroom to use it and came out screaming that his hair had melted. It sure had. We tried over an hour to wash the waxyness out and get down to his hair again, but he resigned himself to finally cutting off his hair. He was freaking out for like thirty minutes yelling, ‘My hair, MY SIGNATURE HAIR!’ I always teased him about that phrase in the future. But after I saw the box in the trash can, I was like, ‘Jay, this dye is for black people hair,’ and he was like, ‘I didn't know,’ and he pointed to the part of the box that said “pour hommes” in French and said that he thought it was *poor homies*. Totally ridiculous.”

I could include dozens of stories of Jay peeing on stage or starting fights, or stories about some of the most amazing shows he played, or maybe even try to explain why I couldn't stop listening to *Blood Visions* for months, or how, when I was sixteen, I tried to figure out how to pronounce Reatards.

But Jay, like many of us, discovered punk rock, rock'n'roll, whatever you want to call it, when he was barely a teenager. And one of my favorite stories comes from that time.

Andria Lisle shared the memory on the Goner Records message board shortly after Jay died.

“In 1993 or '94 I was working at either Memphis Comics or Shangri-la. It's so funny to juxtapose my early memories of Jay—his mama bringing him by to pick up copies of *Maximum R&R*, or calling because her son had once again run away and was hanging out with us older folk in Midtown—with the incredibly talented man he ultimately became.

“Sometime in the mid-'90s, I started a fanzine called *Mississippi Goddamn*. I never printed any more than one copy of one issue (collectible!) but I never forgot the fan letter Jay sent me along with an ad for publication. It included a painstakingly typed interview with himself...with spelling mistakes intact. It's amazing how he always remained true to these initial beliefs.”

I got in touch with Andria and asked her if she still had the letter. After a few hours of digging through boxes of old letters, punk flyers, and invitations to weddings that have since ended, she found it—a one page, double-sided sheet of paper, still in the envelope. “He didn't even know the right zip code,” she wrote in an email to me.

So, here you go, with many thanks to Andria and Alicja.

—Maddy Tight Pants



DANNY MARTIN

THE REATARDS

THE REATARDS ARE AN ASS KICKIN TWO PIECE FROM MEMPHIS TN. THE MEMBERS INCLUDE THE MENTALLY CHALLENGED JAY REATARD (VOCALS GUITAR) AND MANWICH ? (WHO IS USEING AN ALIAS TO PROTECT HIS IDENTITY (HES A BIG ROCK N ROLL STAR IN ANOTHER MEMPHIS PUNK ROCK ? BAND.) ONLY JAY THEIR FEARLESS LEADER WAS ABLE TO MAKE IT FOR AN INTERVIEW MANWICH WAS ON TOUR WITH HIS OTHER BAND

IVE ALL WAYS SAID THAT I THOUGHT YOU WERE A LIVE ACT THAT NEEDED TO BE SEEN.

JAY REATARD-- thanks man.

whats your goal when your playing live?



JAY REATARD-- just to act ass reatarded as posible and to piss, people with dog colloars and mohawks.

what do you hate most about playing shows if anything?

JAY -- groupies -- no I really like playing for people as long as their into it and if thier not who cares.

whats your favorite beverage?



JAY-- thats a stupid question but its pink lemonade snapple

how do you feel about the sudden pouplarity of punk rock?

JAY-- I don't really give a shit ! punk rock seemed really cool to me at first but after a while it seemed really unrealistic I mean don't get me wrong I belive in some of the so called punk ethnics but come on grow up the punk rock dream world will never happen next question please.



how do you feel about major record labels ?

JAY-- hate em.
why did you start the reatards ?

JAY-- I had nothing better to do with my time and if I didn't have an outlet I would probably be insane by now

why did you name the band the reatards ?

JAY-- I didnt name the band

who did ?

JAY -- the auduence at our first performance

explain?



JAY-- we playd one show under the name the river city rollers and did blues versions of bay city rollers songs after our first song some guy with a big green mohawk yelled out " you guys are fucking reatarded " so at the next garage party we

played I anounced us as the reatards kinda as a joke but the name fit so we kept it kicked out martin and kevin and put jason on guitar and started writing punk rock songs

so you guys started of as a bay city rollers cover band ?

JAY-- , well yeah but manwich wasnt on drums then some guy named joe played drums and his freind kevin played bass and this geek from my music class named martin played the accordion you should have seen us we kicked ass

I bet .

what records are on your turntable ?

JAY-- theirs 7 of them on there cause I m to lazy to take one of when Im through with it

what are they ?

JAY -- oblivions soulfood lp, the mummies play their own records, the bay city rollers self titled lp. oblivions strong come on 7" thee mighty ceasers new single, and sacromentos one and only lil bunnies first 7" on mo la la records.

any last words ?

JAY-- yes treat the mentally challenged people just like you would any one else cause we are people to and just cause your reatarded dosnt mean you cant rock



Dedication speaks volumes about a band, especially when they are the kind of band that logs time mostly in dingy basements or smoke-filled living rooms. For over half a decade, Ringers have scoffed at the odds in order to keep moving. They've braved such inconveniences as being spread across the eastern seaboard; tours that put them in debt, jail, or both; and abrupt, turbulent life changes to remain a band.

Until now. Consider this a kind of exit interview. All that is left now is a handful of memories for the lucky among us and, of course, a smattering of compelling punk records.

Their music is like an old friend—indeed I feel like I've always known and will always know it. Immediately familiar, they utilize a lexicon that crams the last thirty years of punk's

hopes, proclivities, and aesthetics into perfect 150-second anthems. They capture the lush, often scummy, world that exists between idealism and ennui, success and failure. The urgent nuggets documented on those records, what's left of the mighty Ringers, are the sound of avowed punks struggling with the lifestyle's imperfections and limitations, but leaving with a reason to keep singing once they've come to terms with it. They pull no punches.

Justin: Drums

Ross: Guitar, vocals

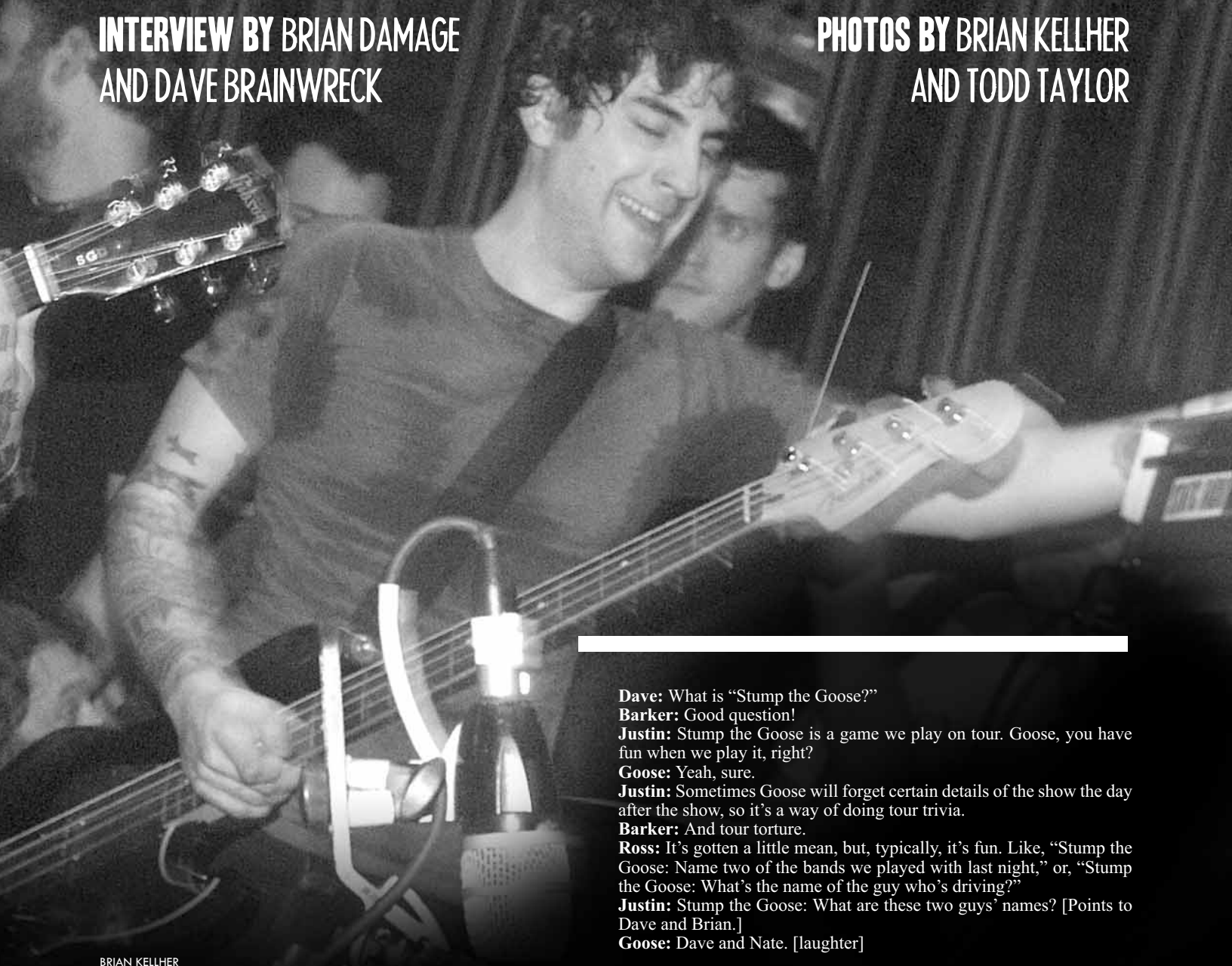
Barker: Guitar, sometimes vocals

Goose: Bass

RINGERS

INTERVIEW BY BRIAN DAMAGE
AND DAVE BRAINWRECK

PHOTOS BY BRIAN KELLHER
AND TODD TAYLOR



Dave: What is “Stump the Goose?”

Barker: Good question!

Justin: Stump the Goose is a game we play on tour. Goose, you have fun when we play it, right?

Goose: Yeah, sure.

Justin: Sometimes Goose will forget certain details of the show the day after the show, so it's a way of doing tour trivia.

Barker: And tour torture.

Ross: It's gotten a little mean, but, typically, it's fun. Like, “Stump the Goose: Name two of the bands we played with last night,” or, “Stump the Goose: What's the name of the guy who's driving?”

Justin: Stump the Goose: What are these two guys' names? [Points to Dave and Brian.]

Goose: Dave and Nate. [laughter]

Goose: Hey, I only met him once before.

Justin: That's a good example of Stump the Goose.

Brian: I know a lot of good Nates, so it's kind of a compliment. It seems Ringers amassed a discography backwards from how a lot of punk bands do, doing two full lengths and then a bunch of splits and singles. Was that a conscious choice?

Ross: I wouldn't say it was conscious. I think it has more to do with location and where everyone was at. When we wrote the first two records, we were practicing a lot more and spending a lot more time together. Right around the time we were recording the second full length, all of our lives got a lot more complicated so it got a lot harder to write music.

Justin: I think we started touring more, too. We did those albums when we weren't touring as much, when the idea was that we were gonna get together and write songs. And then we started touring more, so any energy we had just went into trying to organize a tour. It just got pretty complicated. So, no, it wasn't a conscious decision. It just got harder and harder to make the distance work.

Barker: You should maybe explain the distance.

Justin: I've always lived in New York, while the band's been going on. Ross used to live in Boston, Barker lives in Boston, and Goose lives in Maine. So it's always been just a sort of very impractical way of doing things. I think when Ross owned a record store in Boston and we could practice in the basement there that made it a little easier. We had a good location. Honestly, once we lost that as a place we could play all night, it just got trickier and trickier. We've practiced in New York, Maine, and Boston.

Barker: Very difficult. It's such a pain in the ass.

Justin: We just did a two-month tour. We started to go more into touring, which was fun. But, looking back, it made it really hard to write.

Dave: Did the photo shoot for the cover of *Hurry up and Wait* involve a fistfight?

Justin: We gotta make a myth!

Ross: Yes and no.

Barker: You should probably give the origin of that whole thing.

Justin: The simple fact is that Ross hit me in the face.

Barker: The real story is that we were in Ireland. We played some show; it was cool. I thought it would be really funny if everyone had black eyes...

Ross: You can take a minute to think. It's not going out live.

Brian: Yeah it is. Razorcake podcast.

Ross: We were in Europe, on tour with Lemuria, and we played a show in Limerick, Ireland. The show got shut down and we never played, and the sound guy said we could stay at his house. It turns out to be his parent's house. He's like, "Oh, my folks aren't home," which is a constant nightmare. We've all been in touring bands since we were teenagers and didn't want to go to the parent's house, have them come home, and get kicked out. It turns

out his folks were movie producers and he lived in a mansion. Olympic-sized pool, billiards room, full bar...

Barker: There was a dock in the backyard to whatever river was running through that town. It was the most insane shit you've ever seen. Everyone slept in a bed that night.

Ross: No, I slept on a couch. It became a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde thing. He seemed so nice, but when he got drunk he got kinda sleazy with the girl from Lemuria. His name was Kiernan McMullan.

Barker: "The Robin Hood of..."

Ross: No, he was "The modern day Robin Hood."

Barker: Look it up. He's on MySpace, I saw it.

Justin: He wanted to hang. He was the type of person that you meet who wants to be "down," who wants to hang. It happens a lot when you're on tour, where it's like, "Yeah,

Justin: I was taking a bath and drinking some espresso.

Barker: Think of Francis Buxton from *Pee Wee's Big Adventure*. The fat kid who steals Pee Wee's bike, he had an indoor pool at his house...god, I wanna go back there.

Justin: At one point Goose was reading his lyric sheet and imitating his songs.

Goose: He didn't realize I was reading the lyric sheet though. He thought I knew his songs.

Barker: He thought you were a fan.

Ross: So we were all just popping each other in the eye, you know, just pulling our punches, having a good time. And he's like, "What are you guys doing?" And we're like, "Oh, we're just kinda punching each other in the face." And he's like, "Well, why are you doing that?" And we're like, "Oh, just for fun." And he goes, "Well, could you punch

HE'S LIKE, "WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOING?" AND WE'RE LIKE, "OH, WE'RE JUST KINDA PUNCHING EACH OTHER IN THE FACE."

the band's here man, we're gonna hang!" And it's usually just kind of annoying.

Barker: Yeah, you're just like, "I wanna go to bed."

Justin: You know, or just chill out, or whatever.

Ross: So we're kinda like, "Okay we're just gonna drink this guy under the table." And I'm matching him, we're drinking, and this dude could hold his liquor. At three in the morning, he played us acoustic slap guitar. [laughter]

Barker: Do you remember the lyrics?

Brian: Stump the Goose...

Ross: And we were all joking that it'd be really funny to all have black eyes at the show. People would just be like, "What the hell is with these guys?" So we all started doing it, me and Goose and Barker were all just popping each other in the face. I think you'd gone to bed...

me in the face?" I was like, "Oh, hell yeah." So I rear back and lay this fucking Irish millionaire out, and he got up and shook my hand and was like, "Oh, thank you so much man." Talk about the end of that dude.

Justin: The next morning we left. His friend was supposed to go to college the next day and slept through it all. This kid was like, covered in mud.

Barker: We hadn't even been outside at all. We hadn't even covered the yard yet.

Ross: He had a big shiner, you know. Who was the only person who got a black eye from that anyway, was it you?

Barker: Yeah, I got a raging black eye from that. We were trying to give each other black eyes, and we wake up, I have this big black eye, and Goose just has this big spot on his forehead where we kept missing.

Ross: So we thought it'd be cool to recreate

that for the record. Me and Sully (Justin) hit each other, then I went home and had two of my roommates hit me, too. I had a great one. I had the best black eye.

Justin: Mine didn't really register.

Ross: Goose had a little one, Barker had a little one, but mine was the only one that popped.

Barker: There was gonna be this theme for the record cover, but not everyone had the black eye, so then we just looked like a couple of jerks and these other two guys. Like we're trying to get these guys to go to the local ATM and empty their accounts for us. Got any more brain busters?

a black stripe in my bleached hair. It looked really stupid. They all started calling me "The Stripe."

Ross: There's a little more to it. He got really neurotic about it. Me and him were living in this bus in front of my old apartment. Every night it was like, "Do you think this looks cool? Or does it look stupid?"

Justin: Really? I don't remember that.

Ross: Oh yeah. All the time. And we had to listen to that Rancid record, *Indestructible*.

Justin: Now you're just outing me. I think I answered the question. These details don't need to be put in the interview.

I booked a show for Tragedy and Forward. To get the venue, we did it through this guy. I don't want to name people or anything like that, but his band and this war protestor guy had to speak. I guess his son had gotten killed overseas or something like that. Before the show me, him, and one of the guys from Tragedy were talking. And he's like, "Yeah, my son died." and I was like, "I got a brother in the Marines, I'm sorry to hear about that." Just like, being polite, and he's like, "You must support your brother!" And I was like, "I don't think I have to, man. It's a volunteer army, and if he gets shot, then fuck him,



BRIAN KELLHER

Brian: Yeah. Justin, why are you called Stripes?

Justin: It's actually "The Stripe," so do your fact checking. [laughter]

Justin: Ross and I were in this band Sirens, and I think Goose was in it at the time too. I used to have bleached hair. I made the fateful mistake of well... I don't know how to describe Sue.

Ross: She who will not be named.

Justin: Sue was like, "Hey, we should put some black in your hair." And I was like, "Cool, it will look cool." And it didn't. It was

Ross: Oh, but all day. The Stripe. "Does the stripe look cool? Does the stripe look stupid?"

Justin: The Stripe as a nickname has almost completely died out.

Brian: We're bringing it back.

Brian: Who's responsible for the line, "I got a brother in the service/if he gets shot, then he deserves it."?

Ross: That would be me. My youngest brother is a marine. We don't really talk that much. This is kind of a story too. When I lived in Boston, we used to book shows, and

he deserves it." It was kind of an awkward moment, and the guy laughed. When Tragedy played, that guy stole my line, made that big announcement. "Far as I'm concerned, it's a volunteer army, and if you get shot, then it's your goddamn problem."

Barker: I remember that. I was there.

Ross: I was like, "Ah, bullshit!" And then two days later I get a phone call from my mom and he's coming home on leave. I had to go back to my mom's house and have Thanksgiving with him. Last week I had to

go have some drinks with him. He's about to go back to Afghanistan. He was kind of a nice kid before he went in, just kind of a weirdo, kind of a quiet guy. And he expelled such gems as like, "Oh, so I'm fucking this married chick, right?" And like, "We're over there in Afghanistan trying to give these fucking people a government, and all they want to do is grow poppy seeds!" You know, it was such a bummer.

Justin: When Ross wrote that line initially, I was like, wow, that's a pretty heavy line. I think there's a part of me that immediately defaults to wanting more nuance or something like that. But then I thought it was cool. There's a part of me that's glad that Ross wrote a line like that. I don't have that experience, but sometimes it's okay to not engage in the subtlety of the different arguments and all these other arguments behind military service. There's something neat about a lyric like that. And that's what lyrics are for.

Dave: Why has there been a decline in notating who's responsible for writing which lyrics?

Barker: That's a good question. You're doing good, man. It's not like, "What's your favorite burger?"

Justin: I think it used to be way more individual. On the first record, I wrote a lot of lyrics. It was like a seven/four split or something. The second record was still like that. They were way more divided, and then Ross and I started writing more lyrics together. For the newest records, all the songs were co-written. Basically, Ross would write some of it then I'd fill it in, or vice versa. Or we'd be practicing and Ross would sing certain lines and I'd write around that for the song. It would be too cluttered to say who wrote what. It just became more collaborative over time.

Brian: Tracing your lyrics, Justin specifically, through previous bands like The Insurgent and Sirens for both of you, and early Ringers material, it seems like you've critiqued punk's sense of community and idealism. Is it fair to say from newer songs like "33 on 45" and "Good Things Go," that you've drawn some fairly cynical conclusions?

Justin: I think I am a cynic, but there's a lot I actually really love about punk and am still attracted to it. But there's a conflict there. I was attracted to negativity in punk. I was attracted to being critical in punk...

I was attracted to alienation and feeling like an outsider. Then this idea of community cropped up, which I think is a really good thing, and it's natural. But I don't think I got into punk or this kind of music necessarily to be like, "Everyone's my best buddy, and it's all good times!" I hate that shit, actually. I like having a good time and I really feel lucky to have met really great people, but I find that when bands only focus on that in lyrics, it's boring. I don't think it's the real story. I'm a pretty positive person, and I do find a lot in this that I like, but there needs to be room to still feel alienated and still feel dissatisfied.

We're playing very melodic music, at times very anthemic music, and I think



TODD TAYLOR

it's more interesting to have lyrics that are slightly negative with that. Not overly negative, but at least giving some sort of nod to the fact that it's not all good times. There's nothing that bothers me more, 'because I feel like that's dishonest most of the time, when I see a band that's like, "We're all in this together!" I think there's more to it, and I've always just wanted to get in touch with that. I'm critical of things, but I don't think I'm just pissed about the whole thing.

Dave: Earlier, during your Insurgent days, you were featured in Alissa Quart's book, *Branded: the Buying and Selling of Teenagers*. After your quotes, she says that DIY kids usually phase out in their late twenties. Do you think you fit the sociological mold that she puts forth?

Justin: I think that's a very restricting idea. I think that's condescending. She's coming from an outsider perspective. Whenever anyone tries to come from an outsider perspective to try and capture what's going on and they don't quite understand it, it's natural for them to try and demean it a little bit. To me, I don't think staying the same is a good value system to go by. But I also don't think that means that you've sold out or you're a hypocrite because of things you used to say. I think that's very limiting.

The best people I know, or the people who still excite me, are the people who are taking the ideas and a certain value system from punk but also trying to do other things with it. But not necessarily like, "Man, look at this crazy punk guy!" You can't escape it. I still have the same value system, but as time goes on, it gets more interesting to apply that to other things. It's silly to pretend a moment's still going on when it's not. I look back on that time really fondly, but I think people get scared to change and they pretend to still love the things they loved five or six years ago, and that's phony. I'd rather be honest and be like, there are certain things I'm not in to, but

that's okay too. That's fine, she's gotta write the book, but it's pretty limiting. For better or worse, I can't escape the value system of punk. I think a lot of it's stupid sometimes. Like, I don't carry around an umbrella. That's pretty dumb. [laughter]

Barker: Elaborate...

Justin: Like, doing things more difficult than they have to be is something that I've gained from punk that I can't seem to get away from. I had this conversation recently; anyone I know who's doing something cool, it's because they've taken things from punk and they're bringing that to other things. It could be doing bands. It could be doing punk bands. But, there's gotta be some evolution, and that's a good thing.

Brian: "Motels, Jail Cells, and Hospitals" seems like a good story, but it's pretty lyrically vague. Do you want to elaborate on it? There's a strain of trouble with the law running through the new record. Does that tie in anywhere there?

Ross: What that song is about was... we were... how many years ago was it?

Justin: January 2006, December or January.

Ross: We were on tour with Bent Outta Shape back when Fernando was in the band. It was two bands plus another person in a fifteen-passenger van. We were coming back from a show on Vashon Island off the coast of Seattle, and, on the ferry back, our brakes were smoking a little bit. There wasn't anything we could do about it. There wasn't anywhere to stop, so we're just gonna keep driving straight and take it to a shop in the morning. We were going over a mountain range called Snoqualmie Pass and it was during the year that Washington state was getting record rainfall. In the mountains, there was just foot upon foot of snow. We crossed the summit and the brakes went out in the van. Fernando was driving. We ended up sliding into a tractor-trailer to stop and the van got all smashed in. We ended up having

I DON'T THINK I GOT INTO PUNK OR THIS KIND OF MUSIC NECESSARILY TO BE LIKE, "EVERYONE'S MY BEST BUDDY, AND IT'S ALL GOOD TIMES!" I HATE THAT SHIT, ACTUALLY.

to camp out on the top of the mountain in this motel for three days; two days while we were waiting for the van to get fixed. It was Goose's birthday during that time. It was fucking miserable.

Justin: The thing about the tour, I describe it as one of those tours that, even in retrospect, it's not fun. I still talk to those guys. It was a tour that, three days before it was like, "Are we really gonna go on tour?" Then we just kind of did. Leading up to it, it wasn't even going smoothly.

Ross: No. It wasn't going smoothly at all.

Justin: Then it just got crazier.

Ross: Fernando had a nervous breakdown after the accident and ended up going back to Boston and committing himself for a little bit to calm down. Before he got on the plane, he gave Goose his pot pipe, a little glass piece, and Goose threw it in his bag.

Goose: My jacket.

Ross: Jamie (Ewing, Bent Outta Shape) and I went to the shop, and we were both on the phone passing it off to Stevo—who does 1234Go! Records—to get him to put the repair on his credit card. We got the van fixed. We were back on the road. We were trying to make it to... Minneapolis?

Justin: We were trying to make it to Minneapolis, but, at that point, we were only three people. I don't think we were gonna play.

Ross: The window was taped up. We got pulled over in North Dakota. They started searching the van. They were like, "We're gonna bring the dogs" and all this. There were drugs in the van, without a doubt, but there was such a lapse in time that everyone had the opportunity to hide whatever they had on them. So the dogs came, they walked around, they wagged their tails. "All right, there are drugs in the van. We're searching everyone." They searched everything. They didn't find anything except for when they got to Goose. He had this stupid pipe in his pocket that he had totally forgotten about.

Barker: 'Because he hadn't been carrying it.

Goose: I was asleep up until that point. Fernando gave me the pipe, I put it in my pocket, I went to sleep, and then we got pulled over. I got out of the van, he searched me, I was like, "Oh yeah, I got this thing." I figured I'd just get a fine.

Ross: But North Dakota has the strictest drug paraphernalia laws in the country. Goose went to jail on a Friday with Monday being Martin Luther King Day, so he wasn't even gonna be able to see a judge until Tuesday. I stayed behind. Skip (Bent Outta Shape's drummer) gave me \$200. I stayed in a motel a couple blocks away from the penitentiary and waited for him to get out. Do you wanna talk about the jail at all?

Goose: I don't know. It was a hard time. It was a jail.

Ross: Alright, I'll speak for you. He wasn't in a holding cell for a long weekend; he was in a penitentiary block. The name of the cell was the Northwest Consolidated Badlands Correctional Facility. He was in an orange jump suit.

Goose: Yeah, a whole cell block. I had a cellmate, bunks, real deal kind of stuff. Not maximum security, obviously, but...

Justin: I ended up flying home too, because I had crazy, terrible shit going on.

Barker: And who could blame you?

Justin: I ended up flying home, but, at one point, those two were gone, so it was just me.

Goose: I saw the judge on Tuesday. I did the satellite court thing. When I got out, I had to use a phone card to get in touch with Ross. He ended up being in the motel across the street.

Ross: Yeah, I ended up getting another room at the motel, 'cause they were telling me that you weren't getting out. I was like "I'm just gonna wait here." They had the pesticide guy spray all around me. They turned off the heat. I got really sick.

Justin: Goose's parents called me that night. I thought I had to cover for him, so they were like "Where's Goose?" and I was like, "He's on his way."

Ross: And he was....

Justin: They later found out I lied to them.

Goose: Yeah, I told them.

Brian: Do his parents call him Goose?

Justin: No, I don't think so. They call him Gus, which is weird.

Ross: We left you messages too, right?

Goose: Yeah, I will always remember. One of you guys left me two, maybe you [Ross]. You [Justin] left me one. They were only fifteen seconds, but it was the best thing in the world. I had nothing else to do but listen to those fifteen seconds.

Ross: And then me and him took a Greyhound back to New York and got the van and went back to Boston.

Goose: We stopped in Minneapolis.

Ross: We had a layover in Minneapolis. Our friend Tigger came and got us, took us out to a bar, we got stinking drunk, and bussed back.

Barker: And the band has been great ever since.

Justin: I showed up to this party in Minneapolis, finally. I've got to get to the airport in an hour, and I'm fried. The person who drove me to the airport was clearly drunk. "No problem man, I'll take you to the airport!" I'm like "Fuckin' A," but I just had to go. It was fitting.

Dave: Ross, do you ever appropriate any of Justin's songs for yourself? Like, when you sing them, you're singing about people in your life, not Justin's original characters.

Ross: Can you give me an example?

Dave: Justin writes some of the lyrics and they're about certain people....

Barker: Do you ever sing about Justin's love interests?

Justin: All our songs are about love interests.

Ross: I think we got into a climate of



BRIAN KELLHER

collaborative lyric writing where if either one of us wasn't on the same page, we'd veto it.

Justin: I also think that when I write lyrics for this band, I write them... as Ross. Not really, but there are certain lyrics I write that I know....

Ross: There's stuff that's from conversations me and you have had, stuff like that.

Dave: But I mean do you ever sing songs that maybe Justin wrote about certain people, and you identify and kind of take them and direct them at people in your own life?

Justin: Can you think of an example?

Dave: No.

Justin: A song like "Two Weeks," there's no actual Sophia, but it's about similar ideas that we have. I just write them down and I know they'll make sense for him to sing that. If I'm writing lyrics for something else, I know they'll be different.

Dave: Barker, explain your relationship with bicycle rickshaws. [laughter]

Barker: I am a rickshaw mechanic, and I might be the only person who does that. It's a ridiculous job, but it's a full-time job, and I'm moving to California to do the same thing, sort of. That's what I told the boss I'm doing. It's not like being a bicycle mechanic. I also weld. That's my job.

Dave: Do you weld them or do you build them?

Barker: I don't build the frames, but when they snap in half I re-build them and re-weld them. I sort of grew up on a farm, in a shop, so it all comes from there, really. Wait, how the hell do you know that?

Brian: Research.

Justin: Nardwuar shit.

Barker: That's some serious research, man. That's my job, it's cool.

Brian: Have you ever had a powdery substance planted on you?

Justin: Our tours are always insane. We were gonna go into Canada. We drove from Detroit and we drove over that huge bridge. We get in there, and borders always freak us out. There's always something wrong and we don't know how to lie right. Any band that's gone into Canada knows that you have to make up some stupid story about how you're recording in Canada or whatever. Everything's going pretty cool; Ross has a switchblade.

Ross: Now, hold on. Let's back this up a little bit.

Justin: We'd cleaned out the van meticulously. Turned out he had a switchblade. After they found the switchblade, shit went fucking crazy.

Barker: They were being really nice.

Justin: All right, Barker thinks they were being really nice. They were being nice to Barker to get information from him. I hate to say it.

Barker: I didn't give them any information!

Ross: Barker was about to join and be a Canadian border guard. Barker folds in the face of authority.

Barker: That is not true. I fucking ate acid, smashed my car, and got out of it. I do not fold in the face of authority.

Justin: Well that's a whole other story. Everyone went into their own personality mode. It was really interesting. Barker was attempting to be friendly and smooth it over, which I think makes sense. Goose, you had a rough time. Goose was freaking out. [laughter]

Justin: No, you had a rough time man. I felt bad for you.

Barker: Goose gets scared that we're gonna freak out on him if he screws up.

Goose: And the officer said that we were gonna have to do the strip search. That's an uncomfortable situation for me.

Justin: Yeah, for everyone.

Goose: You guys had a good time with it, okay?

IT'S SILLY TO PRETEND A MOMENT'S STILL GOING ON WHEN IT'S NOT...BUT I THINK PEOPLE GET SCARED TO CHANGE AND THEY PRETEND TO STILL LOVE THE THINGS THEY LOVED FIVE OR SIX YEARS AGO, AND THAT'S PHONY.

Justin: So they're threatening us with a strip search. We're like, "Fucking A." They did strip search us. They were making fun of my jeans at the same time, like, "What are those, your little sister's jeans?" And I was like, "Fuck this guy, I'm gonna have a comeback." So I was like, "No, they're my jeans. I don't have a little sister." Really stupid.

Goose: The officer asked me if I was wearing your little sister's jeans. I didn't know which one of us he was talking about.

Justin: Yeah, they were fucking riffing, man. We had to expose our anuses, and we get outta that and we're freaked the fuck out. We're like, "Holy shit." Barker was thinking about joining the Canadian border guard. We get outta there, like, "Let's just go. Let's just get the fuck outta there. We gotta just go." I start driving and I'm like, "That's weird that there's another bridge. There's a bridge to get in here, and then we get on another one." And then halfway across this bridge, I realize I'm driving back into the U.S. They'd cleared us to go into Canada, but I'd gone the wrong way. I'm like, "Oh god, we're gonna have to do this all over again," 'cause we could've just gotten the drugs they thought we had. So I do this spin-out U-turn on the bridge and

drove back. And that time they didn't say a word. They were like, "All right." And then we got into Canada.

Ross: Can I add some highlights to getting strip-searched? So they're taking everything out of the van and they found this switchblade. We'd cleaned this van head to fucking toe. A couple of us, we party. And we were like, "Oh my god, what else have we missed?" It was a big fucking switchblade. And they were like, "Well, if you tell us where the drugs are, it's just a fine in Canada, blah, blah, blah." And I was like, "If you can just tell me where we can find some drugs, I'll go buy them so we can pay the fine and be on our way." And he's like, "No, but when we get you in the interrogation room, there are no cameras, and we're not gonna be so friendly." It was this terrifying moment, but after we got strip-searched, I was like, "I know none of us have drugs in our ass, so we gotta start having a good time with it." At least you [Barker] and I did.

Barker: Hell yeah.

Goose: I get nervous in those situations. Every time I'm with you guys I'm going to jail, falling down elevator shafts...

Barker: And then we had a wreck in Canada.

Justin: Yeah, I hit a taxi cab and tried to drive away.

Barker: In front of the show!

Justin: I tried to keep driving and the cab chased us down, parked in front of us, and shook us down for \$600. Then I get to the show and everyone's judging me. Like, "I heard you hit a cab and tried to drive away." And I'm like, "Yeah, absolutely, man."

Barker: We were supposed to go in the country and immediately leave.

Justin: We were just freaked out. So that's the show, and on the way back...

Ross: On the way back, the van was totally cleared out, and we're crossing in through the checkpoint in Vermont. I've done it a couple times, and every time you stand out there with the people who are checking your van, they talk to you about tattoos and whatever. This time around they were like, "No. You guys have to sit here." And we were like, "This is weird." They come in after fifteen minutes of searching the van with this pill crusher full of green powder and they're like, "You guys wanna tell us what this green powder's all about?" And we're like, "We've never seen it before in our lives." And they're like, "Well, you guys are in trouble." They start interrogating everyone one by one...and I'm gonna kick it to you, 'cause you have the funniest arrest in Florida.

Justin: Well, the thing is, it wasn't any of ours. Not only that, we wouldn't have gotten in with it the first time.

Barker: Which we explained to them.

Justin: Yeah, it was some sort of trial run, where they were trying to get me to confess to having been arrested in Florida, which has never happened.

Barker: Didn't they ask you about a tattoo or something like that?

Justin: They were just like, "Have you ever been arrested in Florida?" I was like, "No." They were like, "Really?" And I'm like, "No." So they're like, "Really?" The whole thing was just made up. I think they had new border guards or something, younger guards.

Ross: They were younger guys. It probably makes sense. We're sitting there for a while, and they're taking us all in one by one, asking us questions and stuff. They call me up to the counter and they're like, "This is your last chance to come clean about the green powder." And I'm like, "I honestly have no idea what it is. I've never even seen green powder." And they're like, "So you admit to doing drugs!" And I'm like, "Well, we're all adults here, but I'm not trying to sneak it in across the border." The guy's giving me the fucking death stare, like, "This is your last chance to come clean." And right as he's yelling at me, this other cop who's not involved at all comes around and goes, "Hot damn, it's a band! Bass, guitar, drums, lead vocals...we've got a band!" [Laughter]

Barker: And he almost nailed the lineup!

Ross: So we go, "So what happens now?" And they're like, "We're gonna run some tests. If it comes back as drugs, you get a fine in the mail." Okay. A drug fine. And the only thing we brought in with us was our box of money,



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this stupid Ramones lunchbox that had all of tour money, and we fucking left it there.

Justin: It was just like the first time. "Let's just get out of here. Let's just get in the van and go." And two hundred yards down the road, we'd forgotten the money.

Ross: Barker had to run back up the highway the wrong way and they're all laughing at us. I think it was a Homeland Security training thing.

Brian: Are all the references to news and media on *Detention Halls* related to Justin's current job?

Justin: Interesting, because I wasn't yet working there.

Dave: Working where?

Justin: At the *Times*.

Barker: What *Times*?

[laughter]

Justin: I work at the New York *Times* right now. That record came out well before that. I've only been working there for a year. But I've always been interested in the news. I really like newspapers; I really like reading the newspaper. I actually used to like it more, so I don't know. I think it's always been an interest of mine. I think it would detract from this interview too much to talk about my feelings about working there, but they're way more complicated than being like, "I got this awesome job, and I'm on this straight shot to just work there!" I have a lot of issues with working there, but there are also some neat things about it. Essentially, it's not what I ever wanted to do, to go to a building every day. And that's still something to me to not do. I think it's been a good experience.

Brian: What went into the decisions to cover "New England" by Jonathan Richman and "Live It Down" by Radon?

Goose: Didn't I just start playing the bass line? And we started playing it?

Barker: It's a good-ass song.

Goose: We recorded it for shits and giggles, and that's it.

Justin: We love Jonathan Richman. We're fans of those bands. I like that we've always just organically come up with covers, played them for a while, and then dropped them.

Barker: We learned "Government Center" in Europe the day of an acoustic set.

Justin: "New England" has got Maine references. It just seemed like a fun song to do.

Goose: I didn't realize that song even got out.

Ross: "New England" was like a stroke of luck, 'because that cover came out really fucking bad. There was a fuck-up when we got it mastered, and it got left off the master. It was divine intervention of this miserable cover never actually seeing the light of day.

Justin: "It's magnificent...but so is Maine!"

Goose: We all took lines we thought applied to us.



BRIAN KELLHER

Justin: It was so cute. But Stevo put the Radon cover out, which is fine. He put it on some comp or something.

Brian: I was under the impression he put the Jonathan Richman cover on the comp.

Ross: Ew. No. That didn't see the light of day. We don't even have a copy.

Brian: Have you done any other covers?

Justin: Oh yeah, a lot of miserable covers.

Barker: Undertones, we did 101ers...

Ross: Gen X. Before we went to Europe, we learned "Kiss Me Deadly," which is like four minutes of this flying song. It is the longest fucking song, and you have never seen anything bomb worse than that cover.

Barker: We played it perfectly. We showed up in England, we're like, "All right, London! Come out and get that tasty treat you so well deserve!"

Ross: Painfully long song.

Justin: Yeah, playing a six-minute cover that nobody knows is a brutal experience. But then we played "Teenage Kicks" on that tour, and that went over really well. I definitely want to be getting into my thirties, playing "Teenage Kicks."

Barker: We often warm up with "Chinese Rocks," which is not really a cover. We wrote that.

Ross: Fun fact. Dee Dee Ramone actually wrote that for Barker.

Dave: Yeah, I read that in *Please Kill Me*.

Justin: There's nothing worse than playing a cover that no one's into. It's like, "Why are we doing this?"

Barker: We're into it.

Dave: Justin and Ross, what does Brooklyn have that Boston doesn't?

Barker: Nothing!

Ross: That's kind of a complicated question, and it's a different answer for both of us. I

don't know if my answer is totally fair to friends I have in that city. I grew up in Boston. I was super involved in the scene there. I was running a space and this record store, and when that petered out, I didn't feel like I had anything there, just ex-girlfriends and friends I had problems with. I just wanted to move around for a while, and I ended up in Brooklyn. I have no complaints about it.

Justin: I grew up on Long Island. I lived in Boston for a really long time. For me, it's just where I'm from. For Ross, it's different. He made a choice to move here. I just always knew I'd end up here. I think people hate on Brooklyn a lot, but it's usually pretty silly.

Ross: People hate on Boston a lot.

Justin: For radically different reasons. Yeah, people hate on every city a lot. But you can address the fact that probably, the question is asked like, "Why would you move to Brooklyn?"

[Brian walks back from the bathroom with his pants still undone]

Justin: Yeah, just make yourself at home, man. [laughter]

Dave: What's the closest you've ever come to breaking up?

Ross: Uh, we are breaking up.

Justin: The last great unasked question.

Barker: We actually get along rather famously. I don't think I've ever been in a fight with anyone in this band.

Justin: We are ending it. What's kinda good is that I don't think there's been a ton of drama, like, "We're gonna break up." "No, we're still gonna do it!" which is why we've arrived at this place where we can reasonably say it's time to break up. But that might be another question, why we're breaking up.

Goose: Well, when Fern left, that was probably the closest up until now.

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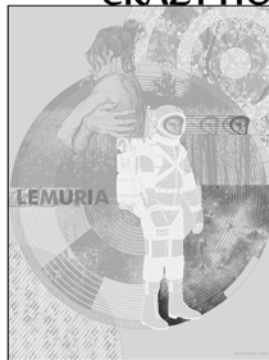
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Barker: When the roadie saved the day!

Justin: For some reason, we've gone through these things that would really test friendships, and we've done a good job with it. So the decision to end the band is, for me personally, I don't think we could do this band the way I want to do a band anymore. It would be too unfocused and spread out. I think it's better to end it while there's still a good energy to it.

Barker: We're all doing new things. No one's really fighting the break up thing.

Dave: Do you have a proposed end date?

Justin: The last show's a little up in the air right now.

Ross: I'm assuming it will have come and gone by the time this prints.

Justin: I wanted to do some thing with Ampere and Pink Razors and make it a fun kinda thing, but that's getting logistically tricky. I'd like to do something kinda cool, but, you know.

Dave: You could play Connecticut.

Justin: Yeah, we'll probably do the last show in Connecticut.

Barker: It's between. It's symbolic. They don't have a bus that goes there, which is weird.

Dave: Ross, you ran a record store/show venue in Boston called Re:Generation. Did working kind of behind the scenes—or in a different role with punk—change your relationship with it at all?

Ross: Yeah, definitely. There's a higher burnout factor. During that time in general, that kind of became a central location for the Boston DIY scene. Through that I felt like I was doing a lot of favors for people when they were in hard times. When I was in hard times, I felt really alone, and that was part of the reason I wanted to move out of that city. Did it change my relationship with punk? Not particularly, but it made me not as inclined to be involved in scenes. Now I don't really book shows. I'm not involved in that culture as much.

Brian: The initial run of the *Curses* LP was self-released, but other than that you've worked with pretty established labels. How have those experiences and labels contrasted?

Ross: I think the CD came out first. We put out the vinyl ourselves. Stevo ended up doing another vinyl pressing, but the first pressing of the vinyl only got sold at the benefit show to pay Stevo back for repairing the van when Goose went to jail.

Justin: I think it's good. I think Stevo's a good guy.

Brian: You've done a lot of shit with 1-2-3-4 Go!

Barker: Every experience has been good. With Yoichi at Snuffy Smiles, he was great. I just e-mailed him and was like, "Hey, I hear you're not gonna do this. We wanna come

to Japan. I like your label. I have a bunch of your records. We got some songs." He was like "Yeah! I'll book your tour. I'll do your record. You have to say that you're coming to Japan." He was nothing but great.

Ross: No complaints anywhere.

Justin: It's been very organic decisions. I've never, never ever been at a point where it was like, "Let's find a label to put out our record!" It's so much nicer to be like, "Oh, we have a friend who does this and they're attracted to the same aspects of punk as we are." It makes it fun. I'm glad we never had to worry about that shit.

Barker: The No Idea thing (Ringers/Ampere split) just happened.

mindred weirdoes than people who play the same music and act like frat boys.

Barker: Or bands that email you like, "Hey man, let's put out a split for the Fest!" It's like, "No, we don't fucking know you."

Justin: It's almost like the label thing. It feels more organic to work with people who have the same ideas. It reminds me of when I was younger when, if you were friends with a band, that was it. There's a deeper connection there than with bands that play a similar style of music.

Brian: Justin, you've known Will (guitarist for Ampere) for a while, right?

Justin: Yeah. For me it was really neat. I used



TODD TAYLOR

Justin: Yeah, and that was awesome. I think with every release I've been excited about who's putting it out or how it's coming together.

Brian: The Ampere/Ringers match-up was kind of scandalous to some...

Justin: I love that, though. That, to me, is one of the coolest things we've ever done. First of all, it reminded me of earlier splits. What I like about Ampere is that we don't sound anything like them, but there's a similar like-minded thing going on. I think that's really neat. There used to be more of that. For me it was a throwback to the idea that what really connects us is being like-minded people, or having the same sense of humor, or whatever. What I really want to try to get away from is genres. I relate more to Ampere—because they think about what they're doing with their music, and who they are as people—more than I do with bands that sound a lot like we do.

Barker: They put a lot of effort into that stuff. Band we respect: Ampere.

Ross: I'd rather be involved with like-

to look up to Will I mean, I don't anymore... [laughter] No, I've always looked up to Will. That's not music I've ever been passionate about, but, at the same time, I really respect him. He's truly driven to make weird music, and I really like that about him. All my bands have recorded with him. And for some reason he likes us.

Barker: Which blows my mind. He really, really likes us, man. And he believes in the band.

Ross: Will Killingsworth is the last punk.

Barker: He also has a zip line at his house. That's not for the interview. That's just for you guys to marinate on. If you've got a band, just go out there and hit the zip line once or twice.

Justin: I think I actually broke the zip line.

Brian: I heard Steven Pierce (Ampere singer) got pretty fucked up on it.

Barker: Yeah, but he gets fucked up on everything. [laughter]

Brian: For that split, was the Aaron Cometbus artwork your doing or Ampere's?

Ross: That was more Ampere.



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BRIAN KELLHER

I'D RATHER BE INVOLVED WITH LIKE-MINDED WEIRDOES THAN PEOPLE WHO PLAY THE SAME MUSIC AND ACT LIKE FRAT BOYS.

Justin: Even though we all know Aaron, it just came together that way. And that was another cool aspect of it. Obviously, we're all really into *Cometbus* and his bands and things like that. The whole project felt like a really neat coming together of things either with people I admired or whatever.

Dave: Do you see Rancid more in your music or your lifestyle? [laughter]

Ross: We got a good one!

Justin: I'd like to address this, because I really like Rancid. I don't mind. You can put that in the fucking interview.

Dave: You're amongst good company here.

Justin: I think what's cool about Rancid is that they can't be in your lifestyle because their entire band is a fantasy punk band, like

how adventure metal is about goblins and all these things that don't really exist, and it's fun to pretend that it does. And I think Rancid conveys this idea of punk, like, they're running from FBI agents in their video. When I was fifteen I was like, "Holy shit!" And I'm twenty-nine now, and, "Oh my god! It never happened." [laughter]

Justin: That part to me is like adventure metal, but for punk. That's fun. And they're really good songwriters. In our music, what I've always thought is really funny is that Ross doesn't listen to Rancid. Only when I put it on in the van....

Barker: And we're all singing along....

Justin: Yeah, so it's there, but only through osmosis.

Dave: Do you wish it was the other way around?

Ross: Do I wish I had a lowrider bike and a baseball bat? I mean, yeah, sure.

Justin: Yeah, in that other video, they're walking around with a baseball bat. Who are they hitting? It's not real. I don't think it's possible for them to really be in your lifestyle, but I think that's part of how I can still enjoy them, because it is this sort of unreal thing.







RAZORCAKE



I can't exactly recall when I first started listening to Scotland's Oi Polloi. It was probably in the mid-1980s, when I had a brief infatuation with Scotland's other famous punk band, The Exploited. While my interest in The Exploited quickly faded, my admiration for Oi Polloi continued. How can you not love an eco-anarchist punk band whose leftist political rigor is only matched by their willingness to take the piss out of almost everything, especially themselves? In the last three decades, they have released well over a dozen LPs—from *Unite and Win (Punks and Skins)* to *Total Resistance to the Fucking System*—as well as another dozen EPs. If you aren't already familiar with Oi Polloi, consider what would happen if Crass had embraced the oi/d-beat styles and developed a sense of humor.

In the last few years, the band began recording almost exclusively in Scottish Gaelic, the local indigenous language. They've gone through countless lineup changes, with the one consistent member being the founder and vocalist Deek Allen. Last year, I was lucky enough to spend several months in Scotland and I befriended Deek. One afternoon we grabbed several bottles of cider and hiked up Arthur's Seat, the hill towering over Edinburgh, to have a lengthy chat about politics, anarchy, fox hunting, and getting old.

| Interview by Kevin Dunn | Photos by Fred Loridant | Layout by Keith Rosson |



Kevin: So let's just start at the beginning. Tell me how the band first started, where and why.

Deek: The band started in 1981. We were kids at school, about thirteen to fifteen years old. Our school had what they referred to as "Rock Concerts" for charity to raise money for some kind of good cause and there would be one every term. We had been listening to punk rock and we wanted to see someone playing punk, but it was always the oldest kids in school playing Pink Floyd and Rolling Stones covers. And we would think, "Man, this is so shit." Eventually we realised that there was no point in just moaning about the lack of good music. The only way we were going to change it was if we did something about it and that's how we started the band.

Kevin: Did you start out as the singer?

Deek: The original guitarist of the band was like, "Eh, I really don't want to have to sing." Since there was no one else to do it, I basically got hassled into singing. We got a bit out of control. The original plan was just to play one concert, but then we thought, "This is really good fun," and it just kind of spiralled out of control.

Kevin: Were you guys overtly political from the outset?

Deek: No. The first year or so we didn't have many political ideas or stuff. It was just about playing the music that we wanted, creating a bit of chaos, and so on.

Kevin: So when did the political stuff start coming?

Deek: Well, the guitarist got into Crass and it started influencing our music. The rest of us weren't terribly impressed by Crass's music. Initially we thought, "This is shit—no good tune or anything." But, then we started reading the lyrics and liner notes. They had been quite critical about oi music, and with good reason. But, we listened to a lot of oi stuff and identified with some of it. So we wrote to Crass and started to get into a kind of correspondence with them about oi and politics.

Kevin: So Crass really turned you on to the anarcho punk scene?

Deek: Well, I also got into Discharge. At first I kind of thought, "This is fucking shit. It is just noise." But I got stuck somewhere and I

only had this one cassette and, like fine wine, I learned to appreciate it. It was then that I started to think, "This is really good." I think the Discharge record—this sounds a bit ridiculous, but I actually do think it changed my life. I really hadn't thought about certain things as a fifteen-year-old kid. I used to think, "Yeah, okay, I guess war isn't good but these are things that happen." But then I started to recognize that this is total fucking shit and it doesn't have to be like this. I started to realize that the government isn't really people we've elected to do what we want. Okay, now that sounds fucking naïve, but when you're a kid you watch the news and take things at face value. Discharge changed my outlook and, obviously, Crass had changed the guitarist's outlook.

Kevin: So these bands were the triggers that politicized you?

Deek: There are always different triggers for different people: something that makes us able to see through the bullshit in life. But, for at least a couple of us, music made us look at things very differently and opened our eyes. So we said, "Okay, we've got a band as well. We should do the same thing." With every song that's got vocals in it, we've got the possibility to say something. You can sing something as simple as "Oi, oi, we rule the streets!" but it's not really doing anything. But if there is something that you are concerned about, you can use a song to make other people think about it. For some people, it may go over their heads, but for other people, that may be the trigger that makes them think about something. And it's nice to know that over the years, people who you have spoken to at gigs, people who write you emails and letters say, "It was your record that made me think about this or made me stop eating meat or whatever." In fact, we had a couple of letters from people who said, "I used to be into things like Skrewdriver, but then I got your albums."

Kevin: This gets to our earlier discussion about how popular culture, specifically music, has the potential to be politically transformative.

Deek: You hear people talk about, "Ah music can't change anything. Music can't change the world," which is bullshit because music changes people. Releasing your first album is not going to start a revolution instantly, but that doesn't mean that it's not having an effect. Unfortunately, it cuts both ways because look at the effect music has on tossers like Skrewdriver and so on. Skrewdriver have very definitely infected a lot of people with their poisonous philosophy and have changed those people, and those people's actions have affects on other people. There are people who are paralyzed or whatever because they got a kicking by a bunch of Nazis who were maybe inspired by Skrewdriver. The paralyzed person's life has changed forever because of that.

Kevin: Were you self-consciously responding to that fascist slant in the punk scene?

Deek: Our album *Unite and Win* was aimed at skinheads. We thought, "Okay, there are lots of skinheads listening to us, so maybe we've got the chance to do something good here." With that record, we deliberately aimed at skinheads, and we made a conscious

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choice not to put songs about vivisection or anything like that where we could be written off by people who would be like, "Fuck those stupid hippies singing about cuddly bunnies" or something. All the songs on that album are about things that might strike a chord with skinheads, skinheads that might have classed themselves as being unpolitical and could go either way. So we've got anti-Nazi songs, but we also had this song "Commies and Nazis," which goes against some of these really unpleasant authoritarian left-wing groups, like the Socialist Workers Party. We knew that most right-leaning skinheads write off the left as just fucking commies, so we put a song on the album slagging off that. There was initially, I think, about three-thousand copies made, and they were bought by people who originally liked Skrewdriver stuff. Later they would tell us, "I burned all my Skrewdriver stuff." That was the exact result we wanted. So in that sense, it was worth it.

Kevin: It's a strange thing,—you being called "Oi Polloi"—with the clear connotation to the oi music scene. It's almost as if you're wolves in sheep's clothing or, rather, sheep in wolves clothing.

Deek: We all listened to a lot of oi music

with some dodgy skinheads. They weren't out and out Nazis initially, but that was the way they drifted. And we kind of thought he'd grow out of it, but he didn't. He got more and more into it and, eventually, we had to put him out of the band. He later got quite heavily involved in the British National Party. As I said, he wasn't the cleverest guy, and some ridiculous things used to happen. For instance, there used to be a trail of BNP stickers that used to start at the bus station and go all the way down to his front door. We got grief because people thought we should have put him out of the band right at the beginning and, in some ways, that was a fair enough thing to say, but we felt, "This is our friend and if we just ostracize him then he's going to continue to hang out with these arseholes and he's only going to get worse." So that's very sad to see someone like that because I liked him when we were at school.

Kevin: You never know how these things are going to play themselves out.

Deek: There was also this other guy—who was a former bass player—who started hanging out with the same group of skinheads, and we thought the same about

Kevin: What was the motivation from the band's perspective?

Deek: We had always wanted to support indigenous cultures and indigenous languages and ways of life. We felt that the language that could actually do some good was the language of where we are. It's not like in a kind of weird nationalist sentiment but we thought if we're doing it here, then we could maybe inspire some other people to do it. We could create a body of work and inspire some other people—some young people—to think, "Hey, maybe this is not just something that my granny speaks. It's not just something for museums," because in Scotland, Gaelic is seen as old fashioned and traditional and definitely not seen as cool. The first Gaelic record that we did was before any of us could speak anything, but it was something we thought we had to do. So we got a friend who was a Gaelic speaker to help us write some lyrics and help us with pronunciation. But we didn't bring it out. We thought we couldn't bring this out until one of us can actually speak it, so we can say we're practicing what we preach kind of thing. The master tape sat on the shelf for a few years. I went to college to become fluent so that we

AS ONE OF MY FRIENDS SAYS: I DON'T GO TO CONCERTS TO CRY ABOUT NUCLEAR WAR.

to start with, and we've all thought that the kind of crowd sing-along thing was great. It sounds good and it's great live when you have the kind of interaction with the crowd. The audience become a big part of it, which is not always the case with other sorts of punk music. But, there are a lot of highly political skinhead groups—red anarchist skinhead groups—so one shouldn't judge a book by its cover. At the same time, there's a lot of totally unpolitical skinheads. Actually, I hate the term "unpolitical." I think it's totally ridiculous because it's impossible to be unpolitical. If you are not involved in any kind of politics, that is very conservative by its nature, but there are other people who say, "Oh, we're not political," but they hang out with Nazis or find themselves fence-sitting, which, again, we don't class that as non-political because if you hang out with Nazis, that is political.

Kevin: Has the highly politicized nature of your music caused any ruptures in the band? Have there ever been any serious political debates?

Deek: Yeah, well, there's one really sad thing that happened. We've had lots of lineup changes over the years, but when we were at school, one of the drummers, when he joined the band, he must have been about thirteen. He was a nice guy and a great drummer, but he wasn't the sharpest tool in the box and he got into Skrewdriver and started hanging out

him. He wasn't into Skrewdriver, but he did start coming out with some nonsense. We would always debate this stuff with him and his girlfriend, who was going down the same route. It worked. They kind of realized and saw it for the nonsense that it was and now they are kind of embarrassed about that nine-month period.

Kevin: I want to talk about your decision to start singing in Gaelic. Was that a personal decision or a group decision? How did it all come about?

Deek: I'd always wanted to learn Gaelic, which wasn't an option at school. I think that certainly says something that you can go to school in a capital city of a country and they don't offer one of the languages spoken in the country—the indigenous language—and also the language that gives you the key to a lot of the history, literature, and geography of the land. To go through school and come out the other end not knowing how to pronounce the place names in your own country is a bit ridiculous, but it wasn't an option when I was at school. I don't know if you have learned languages as an adult, but it's a big investment of time and effort, especially if you have work or other commitments. I was very lucky. At a time when I was unemployed, the college started to do intensive Gaelic classes so I was able to study part-time. By the end of the year, I could speak basic Gaelic.

could back it up. It was something that all the people in the band were happy about.

Kevin: So, is there now a commitment that from now every album is going to be in Gaelic?

Deek: Well, we weren't going to do just one album as a novelty. The idea is that it's an ongoing, living language. We get these idiots who are like, "Why are you singing in a dead language?" It's not a dead language. When I was working on the Isle of Lewis, that was the language we spoke in the office. It was the language we spoke in the pub after the office. It was a language you heard in the street—not from everyone—but it certainly was a lot of people's first language up there and they are more comfortable with it.

Kevin: What was the reception like when you started singing punk in Gaelic?

Deek: It's kind of mixed. Within the Scottish Gaelic folk music scene—people call this "Celtic music"—some say if you're singing in a Celtic language, then it's Celtic. But, some people have this idea that it should be traditional music. I think it is a bit ridiculous to write off a band for not being Celtic just because, even though they sing in Celtic, they don't have this folksy sound. It's modern and a style that they are not used to, so that was kind of disappointing in terms of reception, but we didn't really let it affect our style.

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Kevin: You guys have been around for a while now. How has the scene changed here in Edinburgh and in Scotland?

Deek: I think from what I can remember as a kid, it was really difficult to get gigs. Part of that, I think, was due to the legacy of trouble at Exploited gigs. You know, back then, I'm sure there was a lot going on that we just didn't know about because, as kids, we didn't know the people who were organizing the gigs. There are lots of things around now like email and the internet, which makes it so much easier to find out about things. I remember Crass played up here and it was a couple of weeks later that I saw a poster on the wall and I was like, "Fucking hell! Crass played here!?" But how were you supposed to find out? Basically, you had to rely on seeing the flyers. There were a few bands then and still a lot of bands now. Edinburgh has always been good for music and punk because there are a lot of young people here. There are now four universities in Edinburgh, so that means

war." We think concerts can be there for a lot of things. One, for people who are part of alternative subcultures to gather together and feel comfortable. They can be free from bullshit racism, sexism, and homophobia. Obviously, that doesn't always work, but that's the ideal that you are striving for. Also, sometimes for fundraisers or for places where lots of alternative ideas are readily available—whether that be through what the band is singing, the music that they are trying to sell, through leaflets or some political speaker who is there, or even through films that may be shown.

We want to inspire people and make them feel good, but not in some escapist kind of way. We want them to feel good and realize that they don't have to feel isolated and on their own. Look around. There are loads of us at this gig and we're all into the same thing! We've got power to do stuff and to change things. But, at the same time, you don't want the whole thing to turn into a joke.

Deek: I would say that's a compliment! That's certainly true to a large extent, but you could maybe tweak it a little by saying, "Activists who are really, really into playing music." There have been people who actually left the band because the ratio of activism to music wasn't enough for them. One of our old drummers was really fanatical about fox hunt sabotaging and he didn't want to do any gigs on the weekends during the fox hunting season.

Kevin: We are both old fuckers now, being in our forties. I'm not sure there's a direct question in that, except, how are you navigating that?

Deek: One thing is that it's too much fun to stop. We've been doing this for over a decade and we wouldn't be doing it if we didn't enjoy it. I've seen interviews with some bands who claimed they formed because, "We were determined to spread the anarchist's message," or something like that. I'm sorry, but bullshit! I can understand that someone may have a band and may want to spread

IT'S CERTAINLY NOT THAT COMMON FOR BANDS TO TALK ABOUT THINGS LIKE PROSTATE CANCER, SO WE THOUGHT WE'D DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

that there's always loads of students. There are a few pubs that have gigs, and we also put on shows at Punk Island.

Kevin: Punk Island?

Deek: An island on the edge of Edinburgh which you see from the bridge. It's got a causeway out to it because in the Second World War they had anti-aircraft guns on it and the causeway took out munitions. At low tide, you can walk out it and at high tide it's an island. There are also bunkers, so if it is raining, bands can play inside, which we have done in the past. Punks built this stage—which you can see from Google Earth—by lugging wheelbarrows full of fucking cement out onto this island. We have a festival on the island. It's good because you have to make some effort to get there, but not a lot. It's really fucking punk: no fucking bouncers, no entry charge, nothing. You carry all the gear out: amps and generators and stuff. It's total DIY.

Kevin: On your CDs, you just don't get a sense of how funny you guys are on stage. You guys are fucking hilarious. On the way over, you were talking about how you have to balance the humor with the serious stuff. How do you make that work?

Deek: I suppose everyone would say that they have a sense of humor but everyone's sense of humor is a bit different. Some people don't want to express it in their music, but we like to express our own humor because we have a lot of fun and we like that to come across. But also, as one of my friends says, "I don't go to concerts to cry about nuclear

You can deal with something in a light-hearted way, but you have to be careful how you do it. Look at the 7" *Mind the Bollocks* about men's sexual health. Guys are quite reluctant to talk about health issues. It's certainly not that common for bands to talk about things like prostate cancer, so we thought we'd do something about it. We have a funny take on it with a song about masturbation and a song about testicular cancer and prostate cancer. I don't think cancer is a particular funny topic for a song, given the horrors of the disease. But we didn't dwell on that. We sang about examining yourself—hence the name of the song and its lyrics: "punks and skins having a laugh/checking out our balls in the fucking bath." It becomes a bit funny but, at the same time, we hope it makes people think that maybe they should have a check.

But another song on it about prison rape. I really don't see how you can make that a funny, jokey song, so it isn't humorous in any way. It's an unpleasant song because it's a fucking unpleasant topic. There's another song about circumcision and, again, I don't see anything funny about it, so that's the way that's dealt with. Some people take themselves too seriously and sometimes I think it's good to poke fun at some things that deserve it. And also I like to think we take the mickey out of ourselves.

Kevin: What about activism? Where does that fit in? My first band was once labeled "activists who played music." Is that a charge that you face as well?

some political message, but that was not the sole reason. It was because we love playing music, and it's great to rock out.

We've been incredibly lucky that we've got to this stage where people listen to what we do. We know that every time we release something, people are going to listen to it. We've gotten to the stage where we can have an impact, so let's use it. Sometimes you get really nice letters and emails saying, "I was really depressed and thought about suicide, but your music made me feel that I wasn't alone and that I'm not the only person who is feeling like this. I've got through that period and now I feel a lot better. Thanks." And it makes you think, "Fucking great. We should keep doing it as long as we can."

The other thing is when we get a bit older, life changes and there are new issues. We're going to be the ones protesting about low pensions and stuff. Grey-haired activists. Honestly, I know we joke about the forties being the new thirties, but I don't notice that much difference apart from maybe I don't want to drink as much because I'll be paying the price for it for a couple of days afterwards. I was never a massive drinker anyway, so it doesn't bother me that much, but the body... Well, a few more vitamins when you're on tour, some herbal teas and all that. In your twenties you're immortal, but now I have no desire to get wasted and pass out on someone's floor. Been there, done that.





EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING

I understand firecrackers, record players, and vinyl records spinning. I understand cold drinks on hot days and 4/4 beats. I don't trust fashion when it overcomes music nor do I trust robots when they overtake songs. I like hearing human beings' hearts and guts in music as much as I enjoy the pops and crackles on vinyl. What others may call "imperfections," I think are a big part of what makes the listening experience more real and meaningful.

I don't find myself often listening to bands that need more than a couple days to record an album or need more than a couple grand to record it. I want nothing to do with bands that embrace the words "progressive," "prog," or "fusion." I say, "no, sir or madam" to bands that hyphenate what type of music they play. Boo to "adult-contemporary-funk-blues-dad-rock."

I cotton to people who are—and live by—DIY and who are still just blokes and ladies and aren't douchebags about it. Those are my compass points.

Eddy Current Suppression Ring is a band from Melbourne, Australia. They formed in 2003 during a Christmas party at a record pressing plant on a lark. They're named after an electronic part used in the record pressing process. It's basically an inhibitor for a rogue electrical current from fucking shit up. Over the past six-and-a-bit years, ECSR have recorded three albums—a self-titled one, *Primary Colours*, and *Rush to Relax*—all by themselves in Australia. It's a weird enterprise describing what the band sounds like because I don't feel it needs to be too autopsied and dissected beyond, "Whoah. That's really good. Give 'em a shot." Imagine lots of tension, then release.

There's a refreshing directness and expansiveness to ECSR's music. They inspire a confidence that spans unlikely reaches: Wire. Kinks. Velvet Underground. Gang Of Four. Catchy, bouncy, alive, and deliberate songs.

I was driving through the high desert and their music filled fifty miles of scenery in every direction. That doesn't happen too often with songs. There was something special coming out of the speakers.

After mis-dialing a couple times, here's an interview with Mikey Young/Eddy Current, direct to Melbourne from Los Angeles, California.

Interview by Todd Taylor

Photos by Richard Sharman

(Black Shadow Photography, blackshadow.com.au)

and BullyRook

RICHARD SHARMAN

Brendan Suppression (Brendan Huntley)
 Vocals, synthesizer
Eddy Current (Mikey Young)
 Guitar, keyboard, tambourine
Rob Solid (Brad Barry)
 Bass
Danny Current (Danny Young)
 Drums

Todd: How was your DJing yesterday?

Mikey: Weird and good. There's this really big festival down here, called The Big Day Out, that bands like Rage Against The Machine headline. I had to DJ in this weird tent, The Silent Disco, where there are two hundred kids in headphones and there's no noise. It's really disconcerting, 'cause you take your headphones off and it's just dead silence. [laughs] Yeah. And, you're actually battling against these Dutch DJs. The headphones have got two channels and the dudes can switch between which songs they like more. They were dancing in different sets of timing. The other dude was playing "Ghostbusters." I was, "I can't compete with this. I've got no hits."

Then, nine o'clock last night, my friend started a speakeasy and a pirate radio station on the rooftop of his house. He had it at the same venue. I DJ'd that. That part was fun. One was for fun, one I got paid for.

Todd: Was music something that was around the house when you were growing up?

Mikey: Not to a massive extent—probably as much as any other family. My dad and my mum had pretty minimal stock, a Neil Diamond, Rod Stewart sort of record collection. It did give me a massive love for Rod Stewart, but that's about all that I got out of that. I think my dad played drums when he was a teenager for a second. We weren't an overly musical family, but my brother, who's the drummer in the band, Danny; he's five years older than me. He started being in hardcore bands when he was sixteen, seventeen. I always had that element of his friends being around and playing instruments.

Todd: He was in the Kitchenhands, right?

Mikey: [laughs] Yeah. Where'd you pull that information?

Todd: Oh, it's from the internet.

Mikey: We've all been in different bands that went nowhere and are probably not worth talking about, and Kitchenhands is probably one of them. It's funny. I haven't heard anything about that band for about eight years and I pulled out an old cassette of theirs yesterday. But Eddy Current Suppression Ring is the first band for us all that clicked. "Oh, that's what I meant to do."

Todd: What got you so interested in vinyl records, in particular?

Mikey: Since I was a two-year-old kid, I was just obsessed with my parents' records. They told me a story; I can barely remember it. They may have went out for a day. I don't know what I was doing there by myself, but they came home and I'd pulled every single record out of its case and was cleaning it with a scrubbing brush. I wrecked their whole collection. I just thought I was looking after their records.

I had records when I was three. I was going to shops and buying records when I was seven. When CDs came along, I was like, "I'm not really feeling this." Then I heard about the pressing plant, which was about half an hour from my house and I started hanging around there. Then I got a job at the pressing plant: "Oh man, all my dreams come true."

Todd: That was Corduroy Records?

Mikey: Yeah. When I was about twenty-two, I got a job there.

Todd: Was Corduroy Records the only vinyl pressing plant in Australia?

Mikey: It was, at the time. There was one left in Sydney and my old boss was in a band called The Breadmakers. He was getting a record done and the guy there said, "Oh, this will be the last one you'll be doing, mate. All this equipment is all going to scrap metal." Then my boss bought the plant for scrap metal prices and shipped it down to Melbourne. For a good ten years or something, it was the only plant in Australia—the dark times of the late '90s and early two thousands for vinyl.

Todd: I have a couple of technical band-naming questions for you, in the context of a vinyl collection. Under what letter would you file your own records: "Eddy Current Suppression Ring"?

Mikey: In mine? If I wasn't in the band?

Todd: If you were not in the band, because Eddy Current Suppression Ring...

Mikey: It's like Jon Spencer Blues Explosion. Do you go by "Spencer" or by the name of the band?... Eddy Current, file under "E." No doubt. Even though I call myself "Eddy Current" in the band, Eddy Current is not a person. It's a thing.

Todd: What you did, very deftly, is you skirted being put in the same category as Steely Dan and Lynyrd Skynyrd. Those are two bands named after people who are not in the band, but people always think are in the band.

Mikey: There's probably a list of horrible bands named after fictional people, I'm sure. Actually, I doubt if I find Steely Dan that horrible, but that's another story.

Todd: Do you have preference of how your band's name is shortened?

Mikey: It's just easier: ECSR over here. I think a couple of lazy radio people affectionately call us "Eddy Cuz" for some reason. I'm not that precious about it to really expect everyone to go "Eddy Current Suppression Ring" every time they say it. It's our fault for choosing a stupid name. I'm proud of it, but anytime someone asks us the name of our band who hasn't heard of us, I feel like a bit of a dickhead saying it. "Don't worry. You're not going to remember it."

Todd: Pretty much everybody I know who's involved with music in some capacity has other jobs, also. From what I understand, Eddy Current Suppression Ring has a tattooist, a printer, a record producer, and a painter.

Mikey: Pretty much. My brother, the drummer, is a tattooist. Brad—being Rob on the record—is a printer. Actually, all three of them are great



artists, but Brendan's probably the only one who doesn't really work anymore and can survive on his art and the band—he does a lot of sculpture and has art exhibitions twice a year. I get away with being in the band, sort of managing the band, and I play records out once or twice a week, which gives me some pocket money. Then I record bands that I feel like I want to.

Todd: Sounds like a pretty good life.

Mikey: Yeah, it's varied enough to not get too boring. Summer's good. We play festivals and we make our money. I've gotten to the stage where I can actually not have a real job. I'm not swimming in cash, but I've got way more time.

Todd: I think swimming in cash is highly overrated.



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“I’d pulled every single record out of its case and was cleaning it with a scrubbing brush. I wrecked my parents’ whole collection. I just thought I was looking after their records.”

Mikey: I’d rather be swimming in time.

Todd: And good projects... Going back to Corduroy Records. Corduroy Records used to be called Corduroy Records and Detective Agency.

Mikey: Correct.

Todd: What was the detective agency?

Mikey: That was when Nick (Phillips) first started it. That was before I worked there. That was when it was just a label. I think he

did actually get asked about that a lot. It was a gag. I think there was an old record label that he liked that had a jokey name. Because it was listed in the Yellow Pages, he did a call one day and they did do one job. There was a local market that was selling counterfeit Nike shoes or something. [laughs] So, they went down there and all they had to do was watch a transaction, then maybe purchase a box of shoes. But they messed up. They left the

shoes somewhere and they botched the job. That was the only detective work they did. I can’t believe they accepted the job.

Todd: I did a little detective agency-ing of my own on you and your brother Dan. I was wondering if Dan’s real last name was Helada?

Mikey: Nah, it’s not. That’s only on the first 7”, actually.

Todd: “Helada” is a rare name for Australians.

Mikey: Yeah, right. It's Spanish for something, isn't it?

Todd: "Helado" is ice cream.

Mikey: That's right. It's Spanish for "frost." We, fully, were only ever going to do one 7", play one show, and just quit. That's why we just chose stupid names because you don't expect to have to stick by them for five years.

Todd: Were all the band members working at Corduroy at the time of the Christmas party when you first banged around and eventually became Eddy Current Suppression Ring?

Mikey: Nah. I worked there for a long time and I got Brendan a job for about a year. It was a garage sale/Christmas party and Danny just came down because he wanted to buy records. It was just me, Danny, and Brendan. It was just us three for that first song, which was the B-side of the 7". We taped it and recorded it without bass. Then we got Brad in a couple weeks later and just recorded the other side of the 7".

Todd: Corduroy had the possibility to do live, direct-to-disc there, too, correct? (Direct-to-disc is recording music directly to a vinyl-disc cutting lathe, without the intervention of a tape machine or computer.)

Mikey: Yeah. That was a really good time. I think we were the only place, really, in the world offering something like that. It wasn't just a boring plant. It was where we all practiced. We had instruments set up everywhere. It was also distributor for other record labels. So we set it up so the lathe could be run out to a desk and bands could play in the office. We did Bob Log III, Dead Moon.

Todd: Did you get to see Dead Moon perform?

Mikey: I did see that one. It was pretty cool. It's just funny. It's sort of anticlimactic, actually. It's usually just at lunchtime. You're taking a break from working... Sonic Youth did a live double album. Dirtbombs did a couple of 'em. Wayne Hancock, the country guy. It was pretty diverse and really cool for a while. That boss, who had Corduroy, had to sell the business after awhile. The new guy—a really nice guy—I went on to work for him for a while. But during that time it was just more hip hop dudes who wanted to press records and that side of things. Recording direct to disc didn't interest them. They just wanted to make records.

Todd: Last year, you guys won the Australian Independent Record Labels Association's Australian Music Prize for your second full-length record, *Primary Colours*. \$30,000. And they gave you an oversized check.

Mikey: Which I've always wanted.

Todd: Could you take that oversized check, go to a bar, get some beers, and ask for some oversized change? How does that work?

Mikey: [laughs] That would be awesome. Unfortunately, the oversized check has no use in the world whatsoever. Except, that night we got really drunk, celebrating, walking down the street about midnight through the city of Sydney with our big check. Obviously, those checks have a lot of power. People stopped. People paid

attention. I think they were in awe of our oversized check.

Todd: It's like the keys to the city, pretty much.

Mikey: Totally. It's something everyone's always wanted. Brad has it up in his lounge room, on the wall.

Todd: More seriously, did you use the money towards a studio/recording space?

Mikey: We didn't do anything, to tell you the truth. We gave ourselves a couple grand each to pay our bills, have a good time. When our new album (*Rush to Relax*) came around, that really didn't cost us anything because I did it all myself. That's sort of not much of a cash outlay. The only real expense we've had lately is we made a film clip (a video). It cost two grand. Spent a couple grand on an album cover. We're still sitting on it, but we're coming back to America in June 2010, so it'll be handy when that happens.

Todd: America will happily take your money from you.

Mikey: [laughs] I hear you need it.

Todd: Financial wizards kinda bonered our economy up... Someone else gave me this question because I'm not a music equipment guy. How instrumental is your Goldentone amp to the sound of Eddy Current Suppression Ring?

Mikey: Did an Australian ask that question?

Todd: An American, but one who knows quite a bit about Australian bands.

Mikey: Goldentone were amps made in Melbourne, actually. I've used different Goldentones before, but when I got this one, I finally felt that I had that perfect combination of amp and guitar. "I don't need anything else again. I'm totally happy." Brad's bass sound, which is just a Goldentone guitar amp played too loud, and that's sort of why it gets to be fuzzy. That's a pretty huge part of our sound. I'd say, probably, more the bass than my guitar. It's pretty important to us, but when you go tour America, we don't have our amps and stuff. We've learned to adapt and not be so precious.

Todd: Again, I'm not a musician, and correct me if I'm wrong. It doesn't sound like you guys use a lot of effects or effects pedals.

Mikey: No. There's none.

Todd: From a person who listens to a lot of stuff, it's refreshing to hear something not fuzzy. The sound of the band is very direct.

Mikey: At the start of the band—I'm in other bands that do do more effect-y sorts of stuff—I sort of wanted to have limitations on the sound and make the songs around that. And, also, at the time, I was thinking about AC/DC and stuff like that. My favorite rock'n'roll music is very simplistic—and direct is probably the best word. I also think that records are the most direct and unaffected sound good for the longest time. Mid-'70s AC/DC records still sound great. Very affected records date really quickly. If I record it as simply as I can and our sound is really simple, then, hopefully, it still sounds like it could have been made yesterday in thirty years.

Todd: A hundred percent. Think of something visually. Bad video effects from the 1980s are instantly dated, whereas if someone

was using film and paying attention to light, there's more of a possibility that it still looks fresh today. Okay, this is the most obscure question I have. When I was a kid, living outside of Melbourne, when a big movie came out—I remember *Blue Fin*—they would have the corresponding "icy pole" (popsicle). When *Blue Fin* came out, it was green, blue, and white sherbet, kind of like the ocean. If Eddy Current Suppression Ring could be an icy pole, what would it be like?

Mikey: That's not obscure. That's just hard. Geez, I think we'd just be stock lemonade.

Todd: Nothing fancy.

Mikey: Simple and direct. Pretty cheap icy poles. A common man's icy pole.

Todd: Delicious in summer. Hitting a direct need. I was wondering if you could help me out with a couple of Australian/American translations that I couldn't figure out when I was reading up on you guys. What is a "chickenhead"?

Mikey: Who said that? In what context?

Todd: I don't have the source in front of me, but the sentence is: "Revolver, a local chickenhead/yuppie a-hole haunt of some repute in Melbourne." It was in a live review.

Mikey: Okay, yeah. I only know one person who says chickenhead and it's the singer in my other band. [laughs] I've actually never seen it written. I guess it's an annoying kind of guy who you meet out. Just your average, annoying twenty-something-year-old who's a bit too drunk, a bit too talkative. They're not a specific breed of jerk.

Todd: What's a "tinnie"? "It was a beautiful, low-key gig with local bands and heaps of tinnies and good-natured drunk footy players."

Mikey: That's easy. That's just a can of beer.

Todd: Going on to a more direct question about the band. I'm looking at a picture of you guys on lawn chairs, lounging around at the Meredith Music Festival in 2007. Brendan's hand is wrapped up and his knuckle is taped. From breaking a lot of my own bones, that looks like it was from punching something.

Mikey: I don't know the time, but there was one time when we played this pub. There's a curtain around the stage and Brendan went to punch the curtain. There was a brick wall behind it. Yeah. It really badly hurt his wrist. He had to wear a bandage for a couple weeks.

Todd: Can you tell me about the time when Brendan broke both his microphone and six keys on your keyboard.

Mikey: It was our sixth gig, a house party at Danny's house before they knocked it down. We were just playing our last song and Brendan—Brendan's a pretty intense fellow—he just got too much in the moment and just started bashing my keyboard with my microphone. Broke a couple of keys on my old, '80s Roland and broke the 57 (microphone) as well. I was like, "Dude?" He was pretty apologetic. He had no control at the time. He was a little drunk on Mateus, a Portuguese rose wine, which always makes you really weird. I forgave him, with that in mind.

“Brendan’s far from retarded. He’s definitely a smart guy. He’s just got interesting stage moves.”

Todd: So, that was during the house eviction party in Prahran?

Mikey: I’ve actually got VHS of that, too. We’ve been a pretty well-documented band. A lot of our friends turn up with cameras. I’ve got old tapes of early gigs. I’ve got a good VHS tape of that one. Danny was getting kicked out of his house. I think we just try and play house parties as often as we can. Back then, we probably didn’t have a choice. We didn’t get many gigs.

Todd: What about the time Brendan slapped you?

Mikey: The slap was about a month later. Same thing. Brendan likes to get real close to me and look at me when we play. I was just playing a solo or something. I think I just fire him up sometimes. I took it as a slap of appreciation. He had to express himself somehow, you know? It was a slap of enjoyment, but I was rather shocked. He hasn’t slapped me since. I don’t even think he remembers slapping me. I asked him after the show and it was something that slipped his mind.

Todd: Maybe he was feeling transcendence. I see it occasionally with bands. They’re not even necessarily drunk. They’re just in a different place, “feelin’ it.”

Mikey: Totally. It’s totally good.

Todd: I like seeing that with bands, instead of “Oh, I’ve got to punch the clock. Walk out there. ‘Hello, fill in name of city,’” then playing like robots.

Mikey: I hope we’ve never played a show like that.

Todd: I try to go to a lot of backyard shows, front room shows, and we have access to a low-key skatepark where we throw occasional shows. It’s good for the soul to see music in close settings.

Mikey: Definitely. In Melbourne, we’re forced to play fairly big shows now. Thousand capacity venues. I think, just to keep us sane, a couple times a year, we like to play a private party or a house party. There’s that energy of playing and staring at someone’s face that you can’t replicate when you play in huge rooms. I think we need to do it every so often and remember that.

Todd: It’s important to see the reaction of something that’s happening, to see the



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effect of your music, seeing music have such an immediate response on a person, not just crowds.

Mikey: In that situation, there's not a physical or mental barrier between you and the audience. It's a very "all as one" kind of thing. You don't have that gap. It's all the same.

Todd: Do you live anywhere close to AC/DC Lane in Melbourne?

Mikey: I'm fifteen minutes out of the city, but I'll be walking past AC/DC lane today, actually.

Todd: How much do you consider Eddy Current Suppression Ring a Melbourne band? What's particular and special to Melbourne?

Mikey: We're a very insular band, in a way. I don't really feel attached to anything like people or places or anything like that. I think we're very selfish, in a way, but we're also lucky to be a Melbourne band. We couldn't survive and be as popular as we are or be inspired by other bands in any other city in Australia, I don't think. I'm not saying that no good bands come from other areas, but as far as a self-supporting scene with a lot of venues, Melbourne is one-of-a-kind in Australia. I feel Melbourne has helped us survive.

Todd: With Melbourne, I'm just guessing about the infrastructure—that there's a radio station, good places to play.

Mikey: We're having trouble at the moment with some pretty well-established venues getting closed down because of licensing laws with more people moving into a city, noise complaints, and all that crap. It seems to survive. There are always new venues to open up. There are really good community radio stations. There is support here like no other city. I think there are more venues per capita than anywhere in the world except Austin. You can go out every night and see something that you want to see.

Todd: I know you're not Brendan, but there's a lot of attention to his gloves when he performs live. I understand that he wears them as a sort of security blanket to stave off stage fright.

Mikey: That was the initial thing. Now, it's probably just a habit.

Todd: A signature, too. So, does he switch up the types of gloves? Golf gloves? Driving gloves? Does he have just one pair of lucky gloves?

Mikey: There's a bunch of gloves. I think, mainly, they're golf gloves because they're the most comfortable. There are driving gloves. I think he's got at least half a dozen.

Todd: Has any adoring fan tried to rip Brendan's gloves off?

Mikey: I don't think anyone has actually tried to steal his gloves. I think people have respect for the gloves. I'm not sure.

Todd: I'm interested in bands that have gotten success on their own terms. Here's a quote from you that I think applies a bit: "Limitations are good, in that you've got to go as far as you can with what you've got." Where did this ideal come from for you and what does it ultimately mean?

Mikey: I probably meant that strictly on a musical level. I guess you could take it to the rest of the way we've done things. A certain amount of struggle is important. You don't want everything too easy. Sometimes, I think the more things you add, the more people you add to what you've got to do—be it labels or whatever—it actually doesn't make life any easier. It just makes it harder to remember what you were initially trying to do. We've just tried to just not worry about the outside world. Just make music and plays gigs when we want to play gigs. Not feel any pressure. I think if I was talking about limitations, I was probably talking more our sound.

Todd: Okay, with that in mind, how did you become a good manager as well as a good musician and not compromise either one of them? The dark side to that equation is saying "no" to people who like you.

Mikey: When I said we were insular, we're also quite friendly people. We're not pricks. We don't go around not talking to people. When it comes to us musically and the way we run things, we just block out other people's ideas. I don't know if I did become a good manager. It was just an accident. Someone had to do it. Someone had to book shows and put the records out. It was just trial and error. A lot of early gigs, we played with punk and hardcore bands. I was really impressed with the way a lot of those bands do things. This has never been a career option for us. We're not interested in pushing it. I didn't want anyone else telling us, "You should be getting X amount for this show. You should be doing this."

As far as a career, I don't know if I have been a good manager at all. I've just done what needed to be done at the time and we ended up at this spot. If someone would have done it better, I'm not sure. It has, actually, gotten to the stage recently where I've gotten someone to organize the upcoming album tour. For once, I just want to sit back on a tour and not feel like everything is my fault or responsibility. I'm just a guitarist in a band.

Todd: If you've done something for a long time and hand it over to someone else, you at least have some reasonable expectations of them. You also know what stresses they'll face, instead of you.

Mikey: The last couple of album tours, especially our local album launches, I've felt ill the next day. I take everything a bit too personally. If there's one person in the crowd out of a thousand who had a shit time, or the sound was crappy in one corner, it plays in my head for days. If I take a step back from organizing the shows, maybe I'll just be a band member and enjoy it for what it is. The other reason I kept doing the managing is because we're proud of the way we've done things. People are happy for us that we got as far as we did with our own record label, no manager, and stuff. There's a bit of pride and stubbornness that makes us continue.

Todd: What strategic advice did the manager of the Buzzcocks give you when you opened up for them?



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Mikey: He really liked us. He was just some old pom. He was yacking in the alley, saying that we were the best band he'd seen on their tour. I think he said we needed more melody, pointing to the Buzzcocks, saying, "la, la, la, la." He was, basically, telling us how to write a hit.

Todd: Don't take his advice, but that's pretty awesome.

Mikey: [laughs] No, I didn't take his advice.

Todd: How did you come in contact with Goner Records, who're putting out your full lengths in America? From Memphis, Tennessee to Melbourne, Australia is quite a distance.

Mikey: My friend Richard Stanley used to be in a band called the Onyas, and he used

"I've just done what needed to be done at the time and we ended up at this spot."



to run a label called Dropkick Records. I'm now in a band with him called the Ooga Boogas. I was also running a record label with him called Aarght! Records that put out our record over here. He toured the States in the Onyas a couple of times in the late '90s, early 2000s. I think he did a lot of trades with Goner, with Eric and Zac, and just kept in touch with those guys. When we first decided to go to America in 2007, Richard just emailed them and said, "Hey you should put ECSR on Goner Fest." They let us play. They really liked us. By the time we recorded a new album, Richard emailed them and said, "We need someone over there to put *Primary Colours* out." Because no one put out our

first (self-titled) record in America. "You'd be mad not to do it." They said, "Shit yeah." They didn't even question it. They're very easy going fellows. They just seemed really keen every step of the way. Then they also put out the first record.

Todd: It seems very organic and mutually appreciative. Goner has put out a bunch of tremendous records.

Mikey: Every decision we've made to put records out or what shows we accept, it's all just down to a gut feeling. "This seems like a good idea," or "This doesn't seem like a good idea." We don't take it any further than that. An instinctual reaction. We've had offers to have other people put

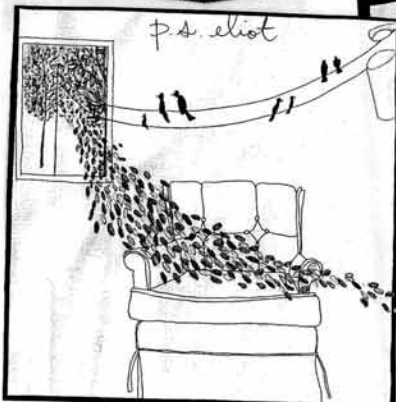
out our records. Sometimes it just doesn't feel right. We pay for our own recordings, film clips, and everything. We don't expect much from people who just want to put out our record. It's just so easy with those Goner dudes. Basically, a handshake. I totally trust what they're doing. I know that they're not going to rip us off. I don't want to worry about big contracts. I don't think we really need that. I don't think many bands need that these days.

Todd: There's a lot of press that makes mention of the band being just ordinary-looking guys. Have any of the members of the band been stopped by a bouncer trying to get into one of your shows?

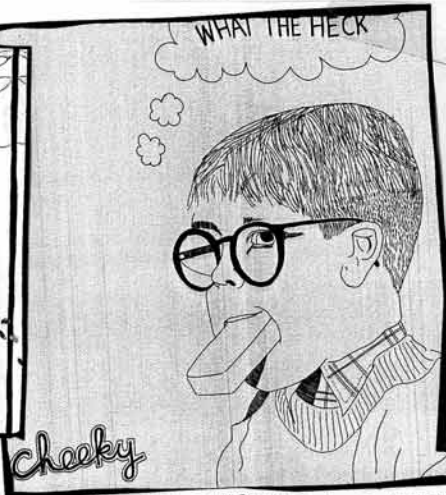


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“The special part of music is when I buy records: that constant search for awesome music that you’ve never heard.”

Mikey: Danny struggled to get in one gig and he was even carrying a snare drum. That was a couple years ago and we decided to never play that venue again. I think also Brad a couple times, because Brad always turns up late for shows. I do know a kid who snuck into one of our gigs by bringing in his own guitar. That was pretty genius.

Todd: It makes sense.

Mikey: I thought that was excellent.

Todd: Brad used to play in underpants made of carpet. Did he get the more flamboyant stage tendencies out of his system early on?

Mikey: Yes, definitely. None of that in this band. That was in that Kitchenhands band they were in. The ‘90s were wilder times back then.

Todd: Do you fear people liking you guys too much? Literally, there’s a quote of Brendan going out into the crowd, “Like Jesus walking on water.”

Mikey: [laughs] I’m happy for anyone to like us. I don’t care. As long as people like us for the right reasons and just think we’re a good band, it doesn’t matter who they are.

It’s surprising. It’s not that we’re massive, but sometimes I do want to keep a lid on it. I sort of miss the small element of it. I think that’s why I start other bands, so I get can at least play unpopular shows as well. Just to get that element. We’ve never got the drive, the energy, or the want to really go for it and make ourselves a big band. I know that’s not going to happen. As long as we still do things at our own pace and do gigs when we want to do gigs, I don’t care how popular we get.

Todd: I always fear when bands are compared to religious figures, because Jesus ended up on a cross. Got himself killed. There’s a down side... And I also found this early description of the band, that you were, “A garage band fronted by a retarded person.”

Mikey: That was a friend of one of the guys in Straightjacket Nation. Someone said to him, “You’ve got to go see these shows. They’re this garage band fronted by a retarded person.”

Todd: To sell him on going to the show.

Mikey: Yeah. Brendan’s far from retarded.

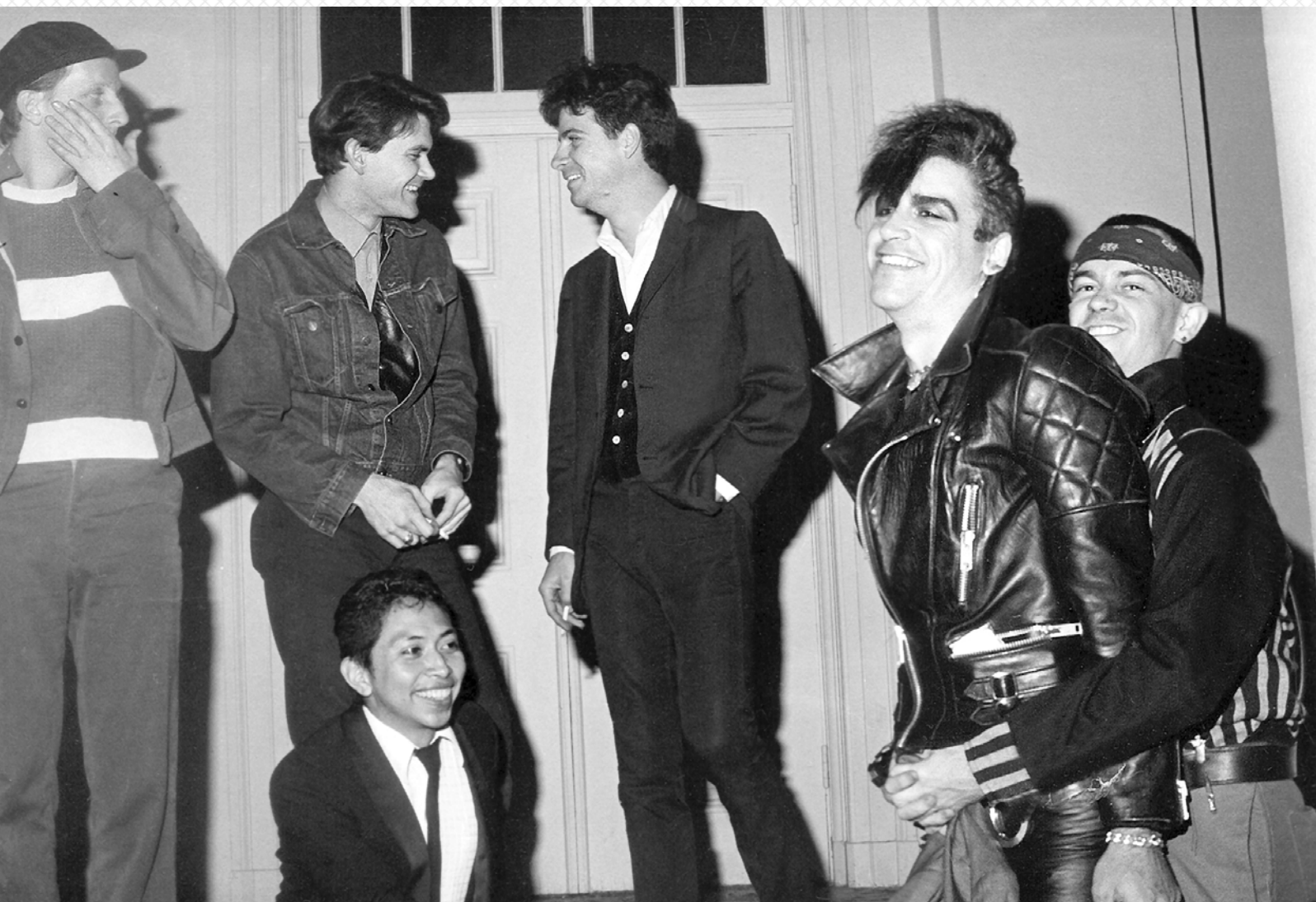
He’s definitely a smart guy. He’s just got interesting stage moves.

Todd: What keeps music special for you?

Mikey: The side projects are just so I don’t get bored. Like I said, there’s a limited template with the sound of Eddy Current, and I don’t always want to play poppy garage with the same four dudes. I think different people bring out different things in you. I like to keep myself fresh by doing that. The music I make doesn’t seem that important to me. That’s just a fun thing to do. I try and not attach any sense of importance to anything I make because I don’t really want to feel like it’s special. [laughs] At the end of the day, I’m just making dumb songs and there are enough dumb songs in the world. I’m just ripping off the Kinks and putting some more dumb songs in the world. That part of music is not special. The special part of music, to me, is when I buy records and I hear other people’s songs: that constant search for awesome music that you’ve never heard.

BRUCE MORELAND

of Wall Of Voodoo, Nervous Gender, the Skulls, the Weirdos, and more.



From left to right: Ned Leukhardt, Chas T. Gary, Gerardo Velasquez (sitting), Marc Moreland, Bruce Moreland, Edward Stapleton.

LINDA BURDICK



Best known for his work with Wall Of Voodoo and his membership in the Weirdos, Bruce Moreland's involvement in the Los Angeles music scene predates the arrival of punk rock. Moreland's first band, Sky People, caught the tail end of L.A.'s glam rock scene of the mid '70s. Bruce formed Sky People with his older brother Marc Moreland (1958-2002). An innovative and talented guitarist, Marc encouraged Bruce to pick up the bass guitar. After Sky People's dissolution (the group only lasted a couple of years and went unrecorded), Bruce and Marc would go on to play together in a number of groups—notably Wall Of Voodoo, Nervous Gender, and the Skulls.

Bruce Moreland made a name for himself by joining Los Angeles's thriving punk scene. Inspired by the new groups playing at the Masque, Moreland became the club's MC; he adopted a new pseudonym (Bruce Barf), and later joined one of L.A.'s earliest punk groups, The Weirdos, after the departure of the band's bassist Dave Trout. However, it was with his next group, Wall Of Voodoo, that Bruce would record his most seminal work to date.

Wall Of Voodoo formed in 1977. The band had roots in singer Stan Ridgway's failed company, Acme Soundtracks. Acme Soundtracks had designs to record scores for low-budget, Roger Corman-like films, with Wall Of Voodoo supplying the material. While this business endeavor proved fruitless, the sound Stan Ridgway, Marc, and Bruce Moreland were developing with Wall Of Voodoo was incredibly rewarding; aided immeasurably by the additions of idiosyncratic drummer Joe Nanini (formerly of the Metrosquad) and synthesizer player Chas T. Gray.

No band sounded like Wall Of Voodoo before its formation. The group was influenced by the sparseness of post-punk, the pioneering synth work of krautrock, and the soundtracks of Italian composer Ennio Morricone. Bruce would play on Wall Of Voodoo's debut EP (1980) and *Dark Continent* LP (1981) before dropping out of Wall Of Voodoo due to creative differences with Stan Ridgway and drug addiction. This departure proved painful for Bruce, as Wall Of Voodoo's

next outing, *Call of the West* (1982), propelled by the hit "Mexican Radio," cracked Billboard's Top 50 chart. Nevertheless, Stan Ridgway and Joe Nanini departed the following year, prompting the remaining members of Wall Of Voodoo to ask Bruce to rejoin; singer Andy Prieboy was enlisted to take over for Stan Ridgway with Ned Leukhardt replacing Nanini on drums.

Fans of Wall Of Voodoo view this second lineup (colloquially known as "Wall Of Voodoo Mach II" or "The Andy Prieboy Lineup") as either inferior or superior to the earlier version. Some consider it a logical continuation of the Stan Ridgway-fronted lineup. Unfortunately, this debate sometimes obscures the merits of Wall Of Voodoo's later records—which are excellent, especially *Seven Days in Sammystown* (1985). Bruce recorded one more album with the group (1987's *Happy Planet*), before exiting for the second—and final—time. Wall Of Voodoo dissolved in 1988.

Following the breakup of Wall Of Voodoo, the group (sans Andy Prieboy) backed up Gerardo Velazquez and Edward Stapleton of Nervous Gender. Bruce and Marc Moreland rejoined the Skulls in the early '90s. Marc experienced some success in the mid '90s with Johnette Napolitano (of Concrete Blonde fame) in a short-lived group called Pretty And Twisted. Unfortunately, after years of drinking, Marc's health began to deteriorate. He released one more album (*Take It to the Spotlight*) the same year he died (2002). Marc has yet to receive the recognition he deserves as one of Los Angeles's truly great guitarists. Bruce Moreland is currently playing in Ravens Moreland. He is the band's principle songwriter and lyricist. Ravens Moreland has just released its third record, *Candy Bad and Pretty Things*. Bruce has taken matters into his own hands; releasing and producing Ravens Morelands' last record himself—a task he understandably relishes after years of putting up with demanding record labels.

Bruce is an affable person and true supporter of his bother Marc. It was my pleasure to do this interview with him.

Interview by Ryan Leach

Photos by Dawn Wirth, Linda Burdick, and courtesy of Bruce Moreland

Ryan: Both you and Marc grew up in West Covina, correct?

Bruce: Yes, we did.

Ryan: Can you tell me a little bit about your childhood? I know Marc was a little older than you.

Bruce: Marc is one year and two weeks older than me. We were pretty close in age. Marc was my only sibling. My mother had us when she was still really young. She was only sixteen years old when she gave birth to Marc. We were raised by her. My dad and my mother split up before I was born, so Marc and I never knew our father.

Ryan: Was your mother a music fan?

Bruce: She was really into music. She actually took me and Marc to the Forum to see Jimi Hendrix play. That was to celebrate my eleventh and Marc's twelfth birthday.

Ryan: That's so cool!

Bruce: Yeah. She loved Jimi Hendrix. She turned us onto a lot of music.

Ryan: She would have been in her late twenties at the time, so she was definitely hip to what was going on.

Bruce: Exactly.

Ryan: Did Marc pick up an instrument before you?

Bruce: He did. I was more into dragsters and cars. I liked music a lot but I didn't think about playing it. At that time, Marc and I were listening to the Seeds and the Electric Prunes. We were really influenced by them and the psychedelic stuff. I'd say those groups spawned Marc's interest in playing guitar. But then Marc wanted me to get something going, too. So I played drums. We started playing around the house—sort of pretending really. But then after a year or two, my mom helped us get cheap instruments at Sears. Marc got like a twenty dollar guitar and I got a twenty dollar drum set. We played around on that stuff. We were very poor. My mom worked at the Santa Anita Racetrack, serving coffee and donuts in one of the concession stands. We were raised off of that and her tips.

There's a funny story about the early days. Back in the late '60s, you could get awesome records at liquor stores. We got the MC5's first album from one and brought it home. We thought it was the coolest record. Since we were poor, we lived with our grandparents. My mom, Marc, and I shared a room. So we played the MC5 record over and over again on our little turntable. One day my grandmother overheard John Sinclair's "Kick out the jams, Motherfucker" intro and made us return the album to the liquor store. [laughs] We were so bummed.

Ryan: [laughs] Was Marc the kind of guitar player who once he picked up the instrument, that was all he did?

Bruce: Yes. That's all Marc did—play guitar.

Ryan: You're known as a bassist. Can you talk about the transition from drums to bass?

Bruce: I had played drums for two or three years. I never got really good at them. I could do some simple stuff. I remember one day Marc said to me, "Bruce, everyone either plays guitar or drums in the neighborhood. No one wants to play bass. So you're playing

bass." He was my big brother, so I listened to him.

Ryan: Was that for the first band you formed with your brother, Sky People?

Bruce: I had picked up the bass before we formed Sky People. We just had informal garage bands before Sky People. Sky People was our first real band, though.

Ryan: There are no recordings of Sky People. But I've read your description of the band and it sounds a lot like Zolar X.

Bruce: Exactly. That was what our style was like—especially visually. I had the shaved eyebrows that went up like Spock's from *Star Trek*. My hair came to a point in the middle of my forehead—like Ygarr from Zolar X. We had the platform boots. It was very glam rock. But we were heavier than Zolar X. We were influenced by early Black Sabbath. We also liked odd timing stuff—early King Crimson.

Ryan: Besides you and your brother, did anyone else from Sky People move on to punk?

Bruce: Not really. I almost hate to say it but we did several shows with Van Halen. We were Eddie Van Halen's favorite band from the San Gabriel Valley. We played the same clubs. The drummer for Sky People was Audie Desbrow, who'd later play in Great White.

Ryan: How random!

Bruce: Yeah. I hear a lot of mixed things about Eddie Van Halen, but back then he was a real sweetheart. Sky People didn't have transportation, so he'd drive his Ford Econoline van over to our house and pick up our equipment for shows. And then he'd drive me and the gear back home later.

Ryan: You and Marc really made a name for yourselves with the arrival of Los Angeles punk: you played bass in the Weirdos, Marc was the guitarist of the Skulls. Can you describe the transformation the Los Angeles music scene went through in the late '70s—from glam to punk—and work out the timeline of events for you and Marc?

Bruce: We were still doing the Sky People thing when punk hit. We played the Starwood (a West Hollywood club synonymous with Los Angeles punk) with Van Halen. After that, we became aware of punk rock. Marc and I jumped right into it. We had been into the Stooges. You can't classify the Stooges as punk rock, but they were definitely influential to the punk rock movement. Then the Ramones and the Sex Pistols came out and the feeling was incredible. All the progressive rock crap—like Gentle Giant—we were grossed out by. Kansas was horrible. We were over the virtuosos. We wanted in-your-face rock'n'roll. We were only about sixteen years old when punk arrived.

Marc and I lived about twenty minutes east of L.A. We were friends with this group called the Dogs. The Dogs were originally from Detroit but they had moved to Los Angeles. We used to take my van down to their place and hang out. One day, it broke down across the street from their apartment on Gower, so we just lived in it for a while. The guys in the Dogs introduced us to Brendan Mullen at the Masque and took us around town. My van was eventually towed by the City of L.A., so we

needed a place to stay. Marc ended up living with the Dogs. Brendan allowed me to live at the Masque if I helped out with maintenance of the place. I became sort of the Masque's handyman as well as an MC for shows. I had a new name—Bruce Barf. I used to do a lot of crazy antics. Dave Trout, the original bass player for the Weirdos, left right after the "Neutron Bomb" single. The Weirdos asked me to join them, so I did. Marc joined the Skulls at about the same time. We went our two different ways. It was the first time we played in different bands.

Ryan: You're very affable and outgoing. In the early punk days, you were known for really pushing the envelope at shows. On the other hand, Marc was quite the opposite.

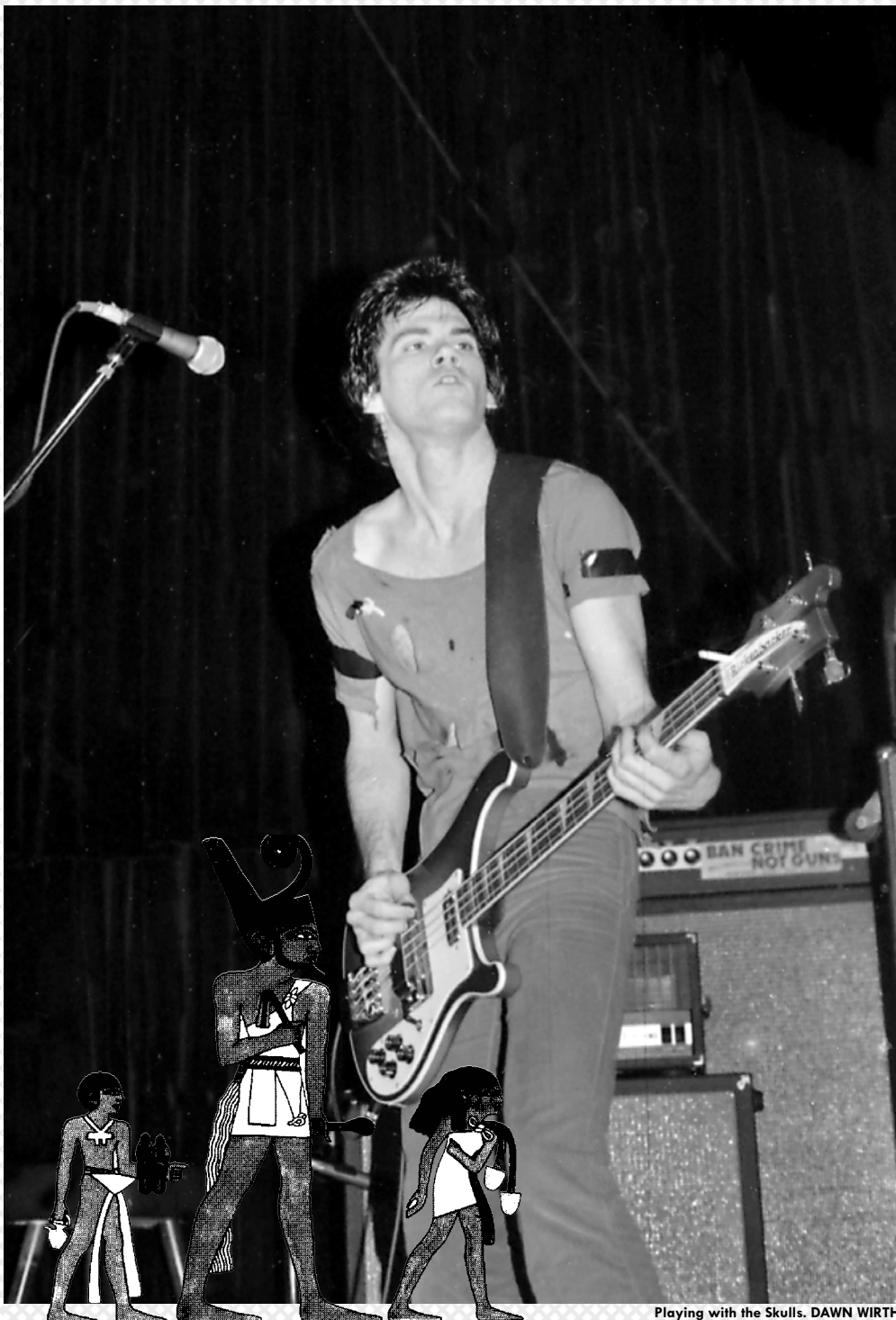
Bruce: Marc was incredibly shy. Although he was my big brother, I felt like I had to protect him because he was thinner and much more sensitive than I was. I was almost like a parental figure. If someone messed with my brother, I would get pissed—threaten them. We were so close. I was very protective of him. He was so shy around girls. I would try to help him out with girls; it was so hard. Girls almost had to beat him over the head with their clubs and drag him back to their caves in order for them to hook up with him.

Ryan: You ended up playing with the Skulls, correct?

Bruce: I would fill in with the Skulls. I also played with the Controllers from time to time. In the '90s, the Skulls got back together and Marc and I played with them again for about a year.

Ryan: When your brother formed Wall Of Voodoo with Stan Ridgway, his guitar playing changed. Marc went from being a very good punk rock guitarist to a formidable and inventive post-punk guitarist. His playing in Wall Of Voodoo reminds me somewhat of Andy Gill's work in Gang Of Four. But then there's also this overt Ennio Morricone influence going on with Marc. Where did this incredibly interesting and unique playing come from?

Bruce: My brother was always changing. Back in Sky People, he was into Mick Ronson (who played with David Bowie) and Tony Iommi from Black Sabbath. He was very heavy then—bar chords and guitars played through Marshall amps. And then he would change. Marc would then play a cheap guitar. He would play the Fender no one wanted. He played a Fender that was half Duo-Sonic, half Mustang guitar. He wanted to do the opposite of what everyone else was doing. He was playing through a Fender Twin-Reverb in Wall Of Voodoo when everyone else wanted that Sex Pistols sound—the big Marshalls Marc used earlier. Marc had also gotten really into Johnny Cash when Wall Of Voodoo formed. He really liked Cash's guitar player, Luther Perkins. Marc was into that stuff before country punk was around. We were both into that. Marc started integrating the country sound into his playing. He liked Robert Fripp as well. He would play Fripp-inspired distorted and bizarre sounds, and then twangy Luther Perkins-type stuff. The other big influence was Phil Manzanera from Roxy Music.



Playing with the Skulls. DAWN WIRTH

We were very poor.
My mom worked at the Santa Anita Racetrack, serving coffee and donuts in one of the concession stands. We were raised off of that and her tips.

Ryan: Can you describe the origins of Wall Of Voodoo? I'm lead to believe that it was Marc and Stan Ridgway who formed the genesis of Wall Of Voodoo in their attempt to get a low-budget soundtrack company going.

Bruce: Marc and I were always comfortable playing together. We were actually living together in an office building across from the Masque when Wall Of Voodoo formed. We wanted to do another band together. I told him to go find a singer. He found Stan. Stan was singing in some dorky band at the Masque at the time. They were almost like a cartoon band. When Marc told me he wanted to do something with Stan, I just said, "Really? You want to play with that guy?" Marc replied, "Yeah, it would be cool. He's like an anti-singer." So I just went with it—that was cool with me. I told Marc to give me a couple of months and that I'd play with him and Stan. I was still in the Weirdos. Marc and Stan had played for a month or two before I joined. They had about three songs worked out. When I joined Wall Of Voodoo, it started taking a different direction. They wanted to do "Ring of Fire" by Johnny Cash, so I came up with that synthesizer part.

Ryan: Wow! That's an incredible synth riff. "Ring of Fire" really got the Wall Of Voodoo treatment with that addition. You used the synthesizer in a more atmospheric way. A lot of new wave bands treated the synth as sort of a novelty instrument.

Bruce: Yeah. Thank you. So it was Marc and Stan at the beginning, but it was known that I was going to join, which I did a month or two later. It was really the three of us who worked out the band's original sound.

Ryan: Wall Of Voodoo was both original *and* incredibly rewarding. How did the group's sound come together?

Bruce: It did all blend together really well. Stan was the Ennio Morricone influence. He loved the Western movie soundtracks. Then there's Marc with the great guitar playing—Robert Fripp meets Carl Perkins. He was also a quirky songwriter. At that time, I was trying to play keyboards like Beethoven. "The Passenger"—I think the Beethoven influence comes out on that one. So it was all of this weird stuff working together. Plus we didn't want to do punk anymore. We wanted to do something more innovative. We were inspired by early Roxy Music and early King Crimson.

Ryan: It seems like you had something in common with the MC5, in that your records never caught the intensity of your live shows. Was Wall Of Voodoo a band that rehearsed intensely?

Bruce: We rehearsed a lot. Sometimes six hours a day, five days a week. We treated practicing like a job. We were very serious. Our sound never did come across on record. I think a major reason why it never did come across properly was because we were using rhythm machines. Nobody was recording rhythm machines back then. Also, the electronics we were using were very cheesy—rhythm machines that came out of organs and although synthesizers had progressed, we were still using the original



Playing with Wall Of Gender. LINDA BURDICK

We were over the virtuosos. We wanted in-your-face rock'n'roll.

Moog synthesizers. It was difficult for people to record these very crappy or old synthesizers properly. Live, it was easy: we'd just amplify everything. I always wished we could find the right producer for our albums. We were always disappointed in our records.

Ryan: Can you explain who released your first self-titled EP (1980)? Did Miles Copeland (of IRS Records) approach you about it?

Bruce: No. Initially, Phil Culp put it out on Index Records. Then we sent out a copy to Miles. He came and saw us play—after he listened to the EP—and signed us right after. So the Index EP was put out by Phil Culp on Index—but was sort of re-released by Index via IRS Records. We had already signed up with Phil to do it on Index, but Phil agreed to let Miles put it out in large numbers.

Ryan: Do you recall recording the first EP?

Bruce: Hardly. [laughs] All of the incidental music between songs was recorded on a two-track recorder. We did those songs on an old Teac reel-to-reel recorder that we loved to use because you'd get this weird echo out of it and every time you'd ping-pong a track, it'd create this new generation. We loved that sound. We'd try to recreate the sound we got from

the two-track in the studio and it never came out right. I wish we would have released the stuff on the two-track recorder instead. But it is what it is. I don't recall too much; I'm sorry. I'm sure we did it in under a week, maybe two or three days. To me, it was like another rehearsal session. I don't even remember who recorded it or who produced it.

I do remember recording *Dark Continent* (Wall Of Voodoo's first full-length LP, released in 1981). Jim Hill produced it. By that time we were signed, so we did it at A&M Records in Studio B. At the same time, Lionel Richie and the Commodores were recording in Studio A. During the recording sessions for *Dark Continent*, Marc broke his guitar. So Lionel Richie came by and loaned Marc his Telecaster. A lot of the guitar work on *Dark Continent* was done on Lionel Richie's guitar.

Ryan: Damn! I might have to give Lionel Richie a little more credit. [laughs]

Bruce: Yeah. He was really nice.

Ryan: Can you discuss the *Dark Continent* time period? You had some financial support from IRS by that point.

Bruce: IRS was supporting us. They'd put us on grueling tours. We'd make no money. We'd

play six shows a week for two or three months. We'd drive five hundred miles everyday. It was killing us. That was the beginning of the end for a lot of us. The drinking escalated. Drugs were consumed. Everyone drank like fish in the band. Joe (Nanini) and I started using heroin to cope with the stress. Everyone was using speed. We did do some cool shows, though. We played the Leeds Festival in England. The Cramps, Bauhaus, and The Human League were on that bill. Maybe the Cocteau Twins, too. Some incredible bands played at that festival.

Ryan: Some bands that had some success after punk were uprooted from L.A. for various reasons. I know the Gun Club had a much bigger fan base on the East Coast—prompting the group to relocate there—and The Go-Go's spent a good amount of time in England. Did Wall Of Voodoo still feel connected with the L.A. scene after it experienced a modicum of success?

Bruce: We were always connected to the L.A. bands. Some of the bands we had the most camaraderie with would probably surprise you. The Mentors were one of our favorites. They played several shows with us. Whenever a club would let them play, we'd have them

open for us. Usually Blackie's on La Brea would let the Mentors perform. We also were friends with some of the Phoenix bands—B People and Human Hands. Black Flag did one of their earliest shows with Wall Of Voodoo at the King's Palace. Jane's Addiction as well. We toured with the Stranglers—they wanted to produce us. IRS did uproot us for a while. We were in New York for two or three months for publicity reasons. We were in Bologna, Italy for a while. We toured Europe and used that city as a hub. We were in England for eight or nine months recording. But we always felt much more kinship with the L.A. bands—the Gun Club and Tex And The Horseheads especially.

Ryan: *Dark Continent* is consistently my favorite Wall Of Voodoo album. How do you feel about the record?

Bruce: Consistently, it is my favorite album as well. But we were still disappointed by the recording. However, when I look back, it's my favorite album that we made. It's just so different. It's one of the most unusual albums around.

Ryan: You had started receiving some recognition around the time of *Dark Continent*. Wall Of Voodoo was featured in *Urgh! A Music War* and you had shot a music video for "Call Box." Although it certainly wasn't a huge amount of notoriety, how did you and the band feel about this growing recognition?

Bruce: We didn't really get that much commercial response, but it was something. We weren't really getting any radio play. IRS was always hounding us about getting more exposure: "If you don't make it soon, you might only have one more album."

Ryan: It was a weird time for bands that outlived the initial punk blast. A group like Wall Of Voodoo goes from being an esoteric L.A. punk band to breaking Billboard's Top 200 and it's still not good enough. Labels like IRS and Sire were expecting you and your contemporaries to break the Top 50 at least.

Bruce: It sucked. You come up with this great record and they make you feel like it's an inferior product. They try and get you to change stuff.

Ryan: Not long after *Dark Continent*, you left Wall Of Voodoo. What happened?

Bruce: I had my own problems—drugs. I also never did get along with Stan. We butted heads. I had a direction I wanted Wall Of Voodoo to take. Stan had his different direction. We both wrote about an equal number of songs on the first two records. The first two albums have songs credited simply to "Wall Of Voodoo." But, really, the first EP was mostly me and Marc. *Dark Continent* was me, Marc, and Stan pretty much splitting the songwriting in thirds. I was the least commercially minded person in the band. IRS Records was aware of this and they kept telling Stan that I was a bit of a mess. Wall Of Voodoo was under pressure to get a hit. Stan thought I was the problem. I thought Stan was the problem. Stan and Miles Copeland had a very good relationship. They were very cozy. So I just said, "Fuck it." I could see what was going to happen. My drug of choice was heroin. The rest of the band was on speed and alcohol. My drug was looked at

as the bad one. So I left by mutual decision. After I left, they did *Call of the West* (1982), which was a big success. Of course, I felt really bad because of all of the pain and suffering I went through before I quit—and here they have their big break.

Ryan: It's the only Wall Of Voodoo studio album you're not on.

Bruce: Yeah. It was painful—for both me and Marc. Marc wanted me in the band. But, at the same time, he didn't want to lose the band. So he stayed with them. Later on, when Stan left Wall Of Voodoo, the other members were like, "Bruce, come back!"

Ryan: You mentioned songwriting credit; in the Andy Prieboy-fronted Wall Of Voodoo, songwriting credits are clearly attributed to specific band members—either to a sole member or collaboratively if that's how the song was written. In the Stan Ridgway-fronted Wall Of Voodoo, songwriting credits are attributed equally to all members of Wall Of Voodoo on every song. In a certain sense, that's pretty cool—it seems fairly egalitarian. Nevertheless, it does leave one curious as to who actually wrote a lot of those songs. For instance, I know Marc came up with the bulk of "Mexican Radio."

Bruce: Yeah, my brother wrote all of the music for that one as well as the title and chorus. Stan wrote the verses. I remember who wrote some of the stuff. I wrote the lyrics and music to "Can't Make Love." My brother came up with the music to "Long Arm" and Stan wrote the lyrics. I wrote the music to "Passenger," Stan did the lyrics. That gives you something of an idea of how our songwriting went in the early days.

Ryan: As an outsider looking in on *Call of the West*, how do you view the record?

Bruce: I love the songs "Mexican Radio" and "They Don't Want Me"—which was another track my brother wrote. But I wasn't really crazy about "Call of the West" or some of the other songs.

Ryan: I actually really like "Call of the West." It seemed to me the fullest realization of Wall Of Voodoo's spaghetti-western fixation. Nevertheless, about a year after the release of *Call of the West*, Wall Of Voodoo went on hiatus with the departures of Stan Ridgway and Joe Nanini. The group's last show with Stan was at the '83 US Festival—also the last show The Clash would play with Mick Jones. It seemed like a lot of post-punk bands were running out of steam by 1983. A lot of money was coming into the picture for some groups, which might have been a divisive factor. What happened at the US Festival?

Bruce: I think a lot of it had to do with the fact that if a band was going to break up—anywhere within seven or eight months of that show—they'd stick around to play the US Festival because the money was so good and because they were already contracted to do it. I think that's why it might have seemed like so many bands broke up after the US Festival. But they were already on that course. With Wall Of Voodoo, it had a lot to do with Stan's ego getting a little too big. He had done a track with Stewart Copeland for

a movie, which probably gave him the idea of going solo. Stan just thought he could get songwriting credit all to himself. People assume that the lead singer is the songwriter and leader of a band. But in Stan's case, he wasn't. And I think it became obvious on his solo records that Stan wasn't the creative force behind Wall Of Voodoo.

Ryan: Can you discuss the situation Wall Of Voodoo was in after Stan's departure? I know you approached Andy Prieboy about singing for Voodoo.

Bruce: When Stan left, the other guys (Marc Moreland and Chas T. Gray) wanted to keep Wall Of Voodoo going. They wanted me back and I was into it. We just needed a singer. I ran into Andy at a party and he seemed perfect. I had heard his earlier band, Eye Protection. Although Eye Protection wasn't our style, I remembered that Andy could sing well from listening to the band. And he was very intelligent. Andy is a super-talented person. He's an incredible songwriter, musician, and singer. But I think a lot of people were expecting Stan and Andy's not Stan.

Ryan: The Andy Prieboy-fronted lineup generally gets three responses from Wall Of Voodoo fans: 1.) Some malign it. 2.) Some view it as an extension of the first lineup. 3.) Others prefer it to the original lineup. I think for the people who fell into the first group, they missed out on *Seven Days in Sammystown*, which is an excellent record. It didn't get its due because of the recent departure of Stan.

Bruce: I agree. I think that's one of Wall Of Voodoo's best records. Unfortunately, people were expecting Wall Of Voodoo with Stan. They expected to hear his voice and they weren't getting it.

Ryan: Andy Prieboy's "Far Side of Crazy" was the hit off of *Seven Days in Sammystown*. Occasionally, a record will hit it big in Australia, while being completely overlooked in America and Europe. It seems like *Seven Days in Sammystown* met that fate.

Bruce: For some reason, *Seven Days in Sammystown* did take off in Australia. It was strange. We didn't even know how it happened. In America, we'd play smallish halls or large clubs. And then we'd go to Australia and play these huge stadiums. We'd wonder what in the hell was going on. It was such a weird juxtaposition. But the Australian radio stations played us heavily. They liked the Andy Prieboy lineup a lot. There were other places, too. A music magazine in France voted *Seven Days in Sammystown* the best record of the decade. There were other areas we were doing great in. We just didn't do well in America.

Ryan: *Seven Days in Sammystown* was a different record for you. Obviously, that has a lot to do with the departure of Stan and Joe Nanini and the addition of Andy Prieboy and Ned Leukhardt. Nevertheless, your brother's guitar playing is more prominent on *Seven Days in Sammystown*. In terms of production, it was also your slickest record.

Bruce: I think we finally found out how to get what we really wanted on *Seven Days*

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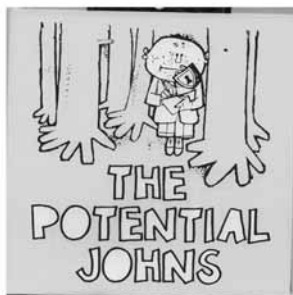


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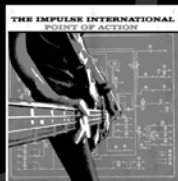
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in *Sammystown*. The first two records—the EP and *Dark Continent*—we liked the songs on them but we were disappointed with the production because it didn't capture our live sound. *Call of the West* was too produced. For the first time, we got to choose the producer (Ian Broudie) of *Seven Days in Sammystown*. Previously, we'd simply worked with whoever was available: "This guy knows how to turn some knobs, so he'll produce your record." Actually, we sought out Conny Plank first. He was a German guy who produced DAF, Eno, and Kraftwerk. We met with Plank and discussed the record. He then went on a tour of South America with a band he was playing in. He ended up getting sick and dying. So our second choice was Ian Broudie who produced Echo And The Bunnymen. We went over to Liverpool and recorded *Seven Days in Sammystown*.

Ryan: How were the early Andy Prieboy days of Wall Of Voodoo for you?

Bruce: Stan was very controlling. If you had a song, he'd always want to change something. Andy was just easier to work with. We would collaborate a lot more on songs when I rejoined the group.

Ryan: Let's talk about Wall Of Voodoo's last studio album, *Happy Planet* (1987). I really like your cover of the Beach Boy's "Do It Again." That song should have been a hit.

Bruce: I know. I don't know why that song didn't catch on. The rest of that album is so-so. Richard Mazda—the guy who produced *Call of the West*—was brought in again for *Happy Planet*. I didn't care for him and I didn't like his production work on *Call of the West* or *Happy Planet*; both albums are so sterile. It was a bad situation. Miles Copeland was on us: "*Seven Days in Sammystown* didn't sell so well, so this one has to be a hit. It has to be commercial. We want you back with Richard Mazda who you had experienced success with earlier." Everything was so forced by that point. We were under the watchful eye of Big Brother. It was a very uncomfortable record to do.

Ryan: That's too bad. It seems a bit easier these days for bands that had some commercial success to drop down to a moderate-sized indie label and have more control over their records. In The Red Records is a good example of a label that's independent, visible, and sympathetic to artists—yet has released records by Sparks.

Bruce: I know. Back then, IRS was an indie label. Sire, too. Independents couldn't get the distribution they can now. There are no major labels today—except Sony and one or two others. Everyone is on an indie label now.

Ryan: The last record Wall Of Voodoo released was a live album (*The Ugly Americans in Australia*). You had left the band before it was released. Why?

Bruce: I knew Wall Of Voodoo was going to fall apart and I didn't want to die with it. It was too sad for me. I hated what the record label was forcing us to become.

Ryan: Wall Of Voodoo did disband just after the release of *The Ugly Americans in Australia*. With the exception of Andy Prieboy, the rest of Wall Of Voodoo



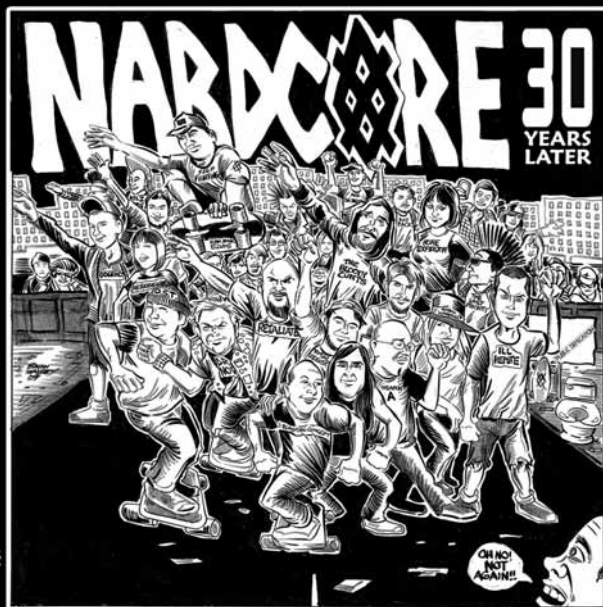
Playing with the Skulls. DAWN WIRTH

I almost hate to say it, but Sky People did several shows with Van Halen. We were Eddie Van Halen's favorite band from the San Gabriel Valley.

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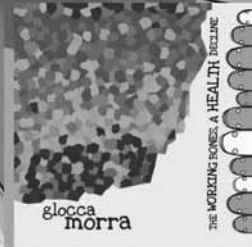
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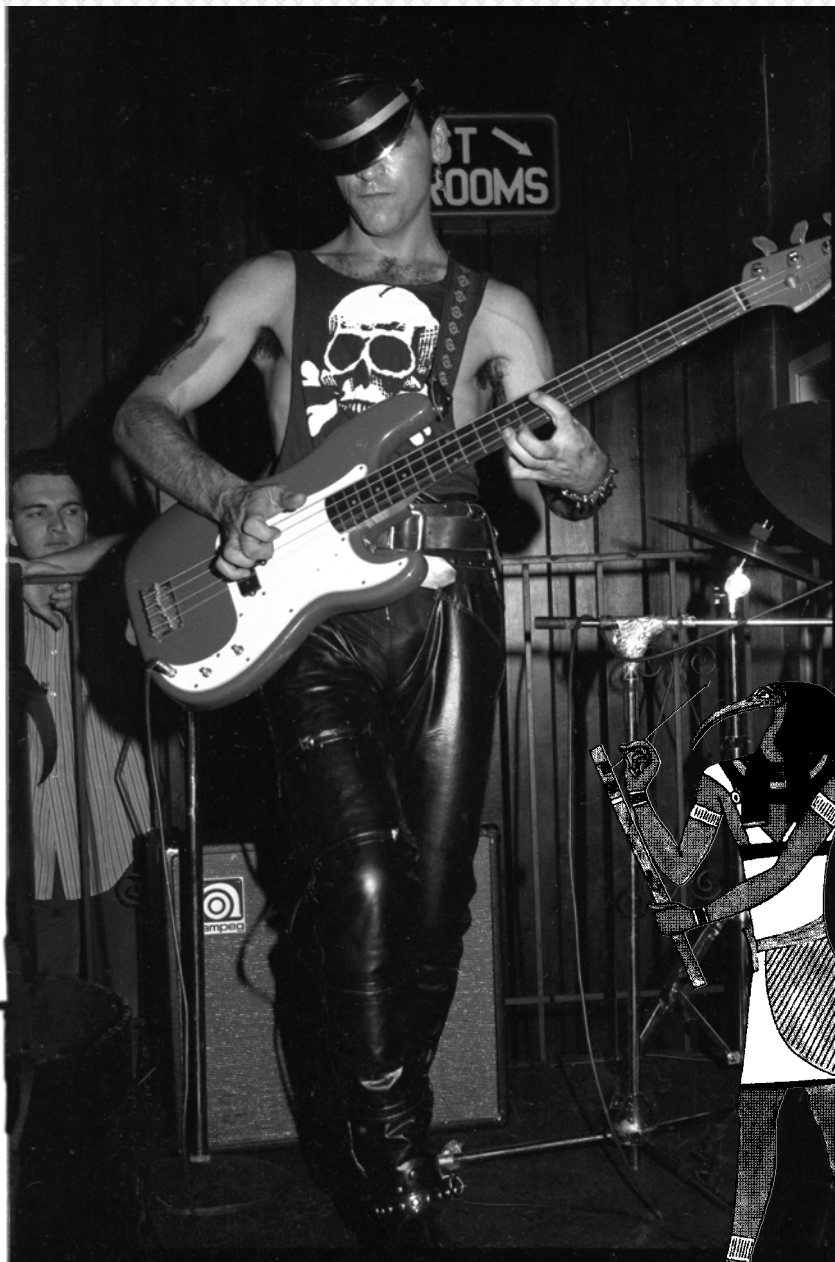
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Playing with Wall Of Gender. LINDA BURDICK

essentially became the backing band for Nervous Gender in the late '80s.

Bruce: That's right. We actually jokingly called that band Wall Of Gender. It was Wall Of Voodoo backing Gerardo (Velazquez) and Edward (Stapleton) from Nervous Gender. And it was fun. We were doing hardcore music again. We didn't care about record labels anymore. We were avant-garde and heavy. It was like going back to early King Crimson. In the early '90s, Marc and I did the Skulls again. In the mid-'90s, Marc started playing with Johnette Napolitano (of Concrete Blonde) and they formed a band, Pretty and Twisted. I wrote a song ("The Sky is a Poisonous Garden") for Concrete Blonde, which appeared on their *Bloodletting* album.

Ryan: I really like the last record Marc did—his first and only solo album, *Take It*

to the Spotlight (2002). His guitar playing is phenomenal on that album.

Bruce: Oh, yeah! I like that album, too. But I've only listened to it once and it was the hardest thing I've ever done. I can hear the pain in Marc's voice. He was so sick when he recorded it. I can't listen to it because of that. It takes me back to that horrible place. It tears me apart. I would fly over to Paris and visit him. He couldn't stay in the States because he was so sick and he couldn't get health insurance. Marc had to stay in France because it was the only place he could get a liver transplant. He wanted to be in the States. It was really hard for him because he didn't understand French that well. He couldn't make out a lot of what was being said to him at the hospital. He only had his wife Frederique

with him, who was French. It was the most painful experience of my life—that last year of Marc's life.

Ryan: I imagine, especially taking into consideration how close you were. In some ways, you guys remind me of Bobby and Tommy Stinson from the Replacements. They, too, were very close and Tommy was indebted to his older brother Bobby for getting him to take up the bass.

Bruce: Exactly.

Ryan: You're doing your own thing right now.
Bruce: Ravens Moreland. Back in the Wall Of Voodoo days, people were like, "Bruce, you should sing." We were always having troubles with Stan and then when he left we needed a singer. But I never felt confident enough to sing. Actually, Ravens Moreland has roots in a band I was playing bass in about seven years ago. We were supposed to record an album with David Bianco who had produced the early Danzig albums. I liked his work a lot and I traded him some flooring for studio time; I lay floors for a living. So I had all of this studio time. But two weeks before the band went in there, our drummer—who also happened to be a great singer and was going to handle vocal duties—quit the band. He was a Christian and he found out that our guitar player was a Satan worshipper! So he left. I was like, "Give me a fucking break." Then the guitarist said, "Fuck it. I'm not playing with him and I'm moving back to Texas anyway." So the band broke up and I'm two weeks away from this great studio time that I worked my butt off for. So I said, "Fuck it." I wrote new songs and worked on my singing. Two weeks later, I cut the first Ravens Moreland record—*Lock Up Your Mothers*. I dug the experience, so I got a full band together. I play all the instruments and sing in the studio. A year later, I did another album with Bianco. I then built my own studio in my house and learned how to produce on my own. I just finished my third album, *Candy Bad and Pretty Things*, which was released this week. You can see the Wall Of Voodoo roots but it's rawer. There's more of a Cramps and Danzig influence.

Ryan: Have you been able to tour outside of California yet?

Bruce: I'm planning my first big tour this spring. We've just been playing around California. It's really hard to tour with the economy in such bad shape. I also don't want to put a band through hard times. Because I write the songs, I feel responsible for the other guys in the group. And I don't want the three or four other people in the band to put a lot of work into something and get nothing out of it financially. It's hard on you. I've done it. I've been there—touring around the United States in a van. I don't have the heart to do it. I can't do the old fashioned tours. They killed my brother and Joe Nanini. It almost killed me.

TOP FIVES

RAZORCAKE STAFF

Aphid Peewit

- Regulations, *To Be Me* CD
- Hamburger Help Me, *Awesome Garys* EP 7"
- Jello Biafra And The Guantanamo School Of Medicine, *Audacity of Hype* CD
- Meatmen, *Cover the Earth* CD
- D.O.A., *Hardcore '81* CD

Art Ettinger

- Rot Shit, *You're Welcome* 7"
- God Equals Genocide, *It Wasn't Made for Us* 7"
- The Max Levine Ensemble, *Them Steadily Depressing*, *Low Down Mind Messing*, *Post Modern Recession Blues* Cassette
- Antiseen / Holly 750, split CD
- The Reactionaries, *1979* LP

Ben Snakepit

1. Little Lungs, *Living Hell* 7"
2. Hex Dispensers, *Winchester Mystery House* LP
3. Vivian Girls, *Everything Goes Wrong* CD
4. Cruddy, self-titled 7"
5. Shellshag, *Rumors in Disguise* LP (I haven't heard it yet but I know it's going to be on my top 5 list anyway)

Bill Pinkel

- Top 5 of 2009*
5. The Gateway District and Dear Landlord
 4. Cheap Girls and Shang-A-Lang
 3. Stymie and Used Kids
 2. Future Virgins and Hidden Spots
 1. North Park Awesome Fast!

Brian Damage

- The Case for Connecticut in '09*
1. Book Slave, *All Bad Things*
 2. Oiltanker, *Crusades* 7"
 3. Estrogen Highs, *Tell It to Them*
 4. Atrilliontonsofgas, live
 5. Birth Of Flower, *Moths*

Chase Sherman

- Top 5 2009 Released Albums to Listen to While Playing Cards with Your Friends.*
1. The Gateway District, *Some Days You Get the Thunder*

2. Shang-A-Lang, *Sad Magic*
3. Cheap Girls, *My Roaring* 20's
4. Marked Men, *Ghosts*
5. Ringers, *Hurry Up and Wait*

Chris Pepus

- Top 5 Things I Learned from We Destroy the Family, a 1982 KABC-TV Exposé on Punk (Since Posted on the 'Net)*
1. "Punk started in England."
 2. "Maybe [punks] consider a bald head and a swastika T-shirt the height of fashion." Brief accompanying shot shows a guy wearing a shirt with a large "X" covering a swastika.
 3. "The punk message" = Fear's lyrics.
 4. "This is not just another foolish teenage fad. It's a daily crisis."
 5. When KABC producers decided to set Fear concert footage to audio of Paul Lynde singing, the idea must have seemed better than it looked in the final program.

Corinne Smida

- Top 5 Albums That Didn't Get Old in 2009*
- Cheap Girls, *My Roaring* 20's
 - King Friday, *Married Alive*
 - Shang-A-Lang, *Sad Magic*
 - Unfun, demo CD
 - Too Many Daves, *Go Full Tard* 2x7"

Craig Horky

1. Coalesce, *OX* EP
2. Randy Thunderbird, *Talking to Kids about Robots*
3. Dark chocolate and bacon cupcakes from Sugar Shack.
4. The Parasites, *Solitary*
5. Tax returns

Craven Rock

5. *Perver!* (movie)
4. *Sonny Liston Was a Friend Of Mine*, by Thom Jones (book)
3. Bobby Darin, *Aces Back to Back!* (CD) and *As long As I'm Singing: The Bobby Darin Collection* (CD box set)
2. Thatcher on Acid, *Frank* (CD)
1. Shorebirds, *It's Gonna Get Ugly* (LP)

CT Terry

- Mayflower 7"
- *Eaves of Ass* zine #7
- Black Milk And Fat Ray, *The Set-Up* LP
- Mannequin Men, *Lose Your Illusion*, *Too* LP
- Short story "Asa Berman" in *Hair Trigger* #32, out this spring

Daryl Gussin

- Mean Jeans, *Are You Serious?* CD tie with Mutoid Men, *Mutoid World* LP
- Fleshies, *Brown Flag* LP
- Mundo Muerto, *Rompe el Silencio* 7" tie with Bukkake Boys 2nd 7"
- Mayyors, *Deads* 12" EP
- *Welcome to 1984* Comp. LP

Dave Brainwreck

- Less Records, More Books*
1. *So Long a Letter*, Mariama Ba
 2. *Play It as It Lays*, Joan Didion
 3. *Jesus' Son*, Denis Johnson
 4. *Open Veins of Latin America*, Eduardo Galeano
 5. *Enormous Changes at the Last Minute*, Grace Paley

Dave Disorder

1. Superchunk, *Leaves in the Gutter* EP
2. King Friday, *Married Alive* CD
3. The Gateway District, *Some Days You Get the Thunder* LP
4. Cheap Girls, *My Roaring* 20's CD
5. Wild America, demo cassette

Dave Williams

- Top 5 Things Getting Me Through Another Ottawa Winter*
1. Listening to Gorgoroth.
 2. My killer new swanky-ass condo. Dang!
 3. Jamming/recording with Year Zero and another as-of-yet-unnamed band.
 4. Cuba with pals in April and Germany with Last Communion in May.
 5. The upcoming weeks of Olympics-devoted catatonia with Jessica and our misbehaving cats.

Denise DePaolo

- 5 Best Books That I Was Forced to Read This Semester*
1. *Maus* vol. I & II, by Art Spiegelman
 2. *White Noise*, by Don DeLillo
 3. *Flight to Canada*, by Ishmael Reed
 4. *The Trial of Mary Queen of*

Scots, by Jayne Elizabeth Lewis

5. *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, by Milan Kundera

Designated Dale

Top 5 Most Hideous Tattoos You Could Possibly Get

1. The Tasmanian Devil from *Looney Tunes*. Really? Come on, killer, you're not *that* crazy.
2. Tribal designs. If there's neither Aborigine nor islander blood coursing through your veins, what tribe does your ink represent? Meathead University Tribe?
3. The Playboy bunny logo... *sigh*...and tell your artist they're fucking fired—that rabbit head looks more like a pair of scissors with Down's Syndrome.
4. A wizard. Look, man, unless that wizard you have permanently inked into your skin can wave a magic wand over his ass and pull out the world's most delicious burrito, you can fuck right off.
5. Grateful Dead tattoos. If I have to explain this one, stay the hell away from me.

Ian Wise

- Aerosols, 12" + 7"
- Catalyst, *Swallow Your Teeth* 12"
- Kings' Of Nuthin', *Old Habits Die Hard* CD
- Nazi Dust, self-titled 7"
- Iron Lung / Walls / Pig Heart Transplant, *Public Humiliation* 12"

Jake Shut

- Riffs of Winter Desolation*
- Thou
 - Droids Attack
 - Godflesh
 - Fudge Tunnel
 - Electric Wizard

Jeff Proctor

Top 5 Reasons Why Moving Punk Rock Bowling to Henderson, in May Isn't the End of the World

1. Cheaper bowling
2. Cheaper hotel
3. All of the shows (if you're into that sort of thing) will be at the hotel
4. Pool with swim-up bar
5. Even though Punk Rock Bowling jumped the shark years ago, it's still Vegas. Guilt-free gluttony!

Jennifer Federico

Top 5 Favorite Music DVDs to Date

1. *X: The Unheard Music*
2. *Refused Are Fucking Dead*
3. *The Birthday Party: Pleasure Heads Must Burn*
4. *End of the Century: The Story of the Ramones*
5. *American Hardcore*

"This is not just another foolish teenage fad. It's a daily crisis."

Jimmy Alvarado's

Funtastic Five

- The men of Aztlan Underground for all their support and help with gettin' the word out about *Eastside Punks*
- *Deutsche Harmonia Mudi's 50th Anniversary* box set: Fifty CDs of Baroque period goodness from my fave classical music label
- Beatles CD reissues: Haven't gotten 'em all yet, but so far, so good
- *Superfly Soul* CD compilations: Proof that not everything about the '70s sucked
- *Therese Raquin* novel by Emile Zola: One-hundred-forty-three years old and still a pretty decadent little read

Joe Dana

Top 5 Alternatives to Being the "FREEBIRD!" or "Play some Skynyrd!" Guy

5. "Louie Louie!" (My old favorite. Most bands know how to play it. You never know when this'll actually work.)
4. "Taking Care of Business!" ("Get to the part about working overtime!")
3. "Carry on My Wayward Son!"
2. "Billie Jean Is Not My Lover!"
1. "Waaa-aaanted!" or "Cowboy!" (This has to be sung like Bon Jovi to be truly effective.)

Joe Evans III

1. House Boat, *The Delaware Octopus* CD
2. The Hextalls, *Get Smashed* CD
3. Vacation Bible School / Bi-Furious, *Split 7"*
4. Mudhoney, *Superfuzz Big Muff* (re-issue) CD
5. *The Nardwuar Radio Show* on WFMU

Juan Espinosa

1. Mean Jeans, *Are You Serious?* LP
2. Krig I Hudik 7"
3. Airfix Kits, new 7"s
4. Sinks, *I Drove the Sinks 7"*
5. Melt-Banana, *Initial T 3"* CD

Keith Rosson

- Dan Padilla, *A Collection Not Perfection* LP
- Cobra Skulls, *American Rubicon* LP
- Comadre, *A Wolf Ticket* LP and Mixtape downloads
- Lawrence Arms, *Buttsweat and Tears 7"*
- And on a non-musical note, William Gay is easily one of the best novelists I've read in the past few years.

Kurt Morris

1. Heks Orkest
2. Making podcasts for Razorcake
3. Working on my thesis
4. Sleeping
5. Trying to figure out what I'm going to do after I graduate.

Lauren Measure

Top 5 Records for

My Month of January

1. Averkiou, *Throwing Sparks* (Where have I been? this band is amazing.)
2. The Wedding Present, *Bizarro*
3. Onion Flavored Rings, *Two Minutes' Enlightenment*
4. The Gits, *Enter the Conquering Chicken*
5. Greg Cartwright, *Live at the Circle A*

Mademoiselle Ever

A.k.a "The Girl About Town"

- Needles, *Desastre 7"* EP
- N.N., *Pasivos Muertos 7"* EP
- God Equals Genocide, *It Wasn't Made For Us 7"* EP
- La Plebe and Handski at the Garvanza Skate Park
- *Love And Rockets* book #20 *Dicks and Deedees*, Jaime Hernandez

Matt Average

- Topaz Rags, *Capricorn Born Again* LP
- Reactionaries, *The, Ingenuity* LP
- Xeno & Oaklander, *Sentinel* LP
- U.X. Vileheads, *First* EP
- Guilt Trip, *Outrageous Claims* LP

Mike Faloon

5 Overlooked Gems from Stevie Wonder's Anthology

1. "Do Yourself a Favor"
2. "I'm Wondering"
3. "Nothing's Too Good for My Baby"
4. "You Met Your Match"
5. "Ain't That Asking for Trouble"

Mike Frame

1. The Front, *Snake Oil Salesman*
2. *Crazy Heart*, movie and soundtrack
3. Drivin N Cryin, *Bubble Factory*
4. Ryan Bingham, *Roadhouse Sun*
5. Drivin N Cryin, *Fly Me Courageous*

MP Johnson

- Exodus and Arch Enemy, live at the Rock
- Impaler, *Cryptozoology* CD
- Skarhead, *Drugs, Music & Sex* CD
- Gallagher and Metallagher, live at Station 4
- Apple Jacks for breakfast, lunch, and dinner

Mr. Z

Top 5 DVDs

1. *The People Speak* by Howard Zinn. Nothing short of amazing
2. *Moon*. No more energy crisis. But at what cost? So good.
3. *Drag Me To Hell*. Sam Raimi returns to low budget horror. Need I say more?
4. *Manstrokewoman*. That guy from Shaun of the Dead (The fat one)...and his friends. SNL meets Monty Python meets *The Office*.

5. *Manufacturing Consent*: Noam Chomsky. A bit long, but still unbiased and revolutionary.

Naked Rob (KSCU 103.3FM)

1. Fucked Up, *Couple Songs* LP (singles and stuff)
2. Hickoids, *Hairy Chafin' EP* (Classic Texas cow punk)
3. Psychology Of Genocide, *Apostasy* CD (Frisco hardcore)
4. The Attack Of, *Nostalgia and Rebellion* CD (Florida punk rock)
5. Jeff The Brotherhood, *Heavy Days* CD (Garage pop punk)

Nighthawk

- Big Knife, self-titled cassette
- *The Wrestling Album* LP
- The Arrivals and Grabass Charlestons, *Sister Series 7"*s
- Vindictives, *Original Masters* CD
- Chuck Berry, *Rock 'N Roll Rarities* Cassette

Rene Navarro

1. God Equals Genocide, *It Wasn't Made For Us 7"*
2. *Cortes Crudos Skate Zine* issue #6
3. Bumbklaatt, *Luctus* CD
4. Johnny Cash, *American V: A Hundred Highways* CD
5. Rising above, staying strong, and holding on.

Rev. Nørb

- Le Kid Et Les Marinellis, *T'est Pas d'Ici* 45
- Len Price 3, *Pictures* LP
- Lovetaps, *Love 'Em or Leave 'Em* 45
- Bad Sports, self-titled LP
- Marked Men / This Is My Fist, *Split* 45

Rhythm Chicken

- Top 5 Songs of All Time for 2010 Thus Far!*
- "Metal Detector" the Figgs, *Slow Charm* CD
 - "Stomp" Die Kreuzen, *Century Days* CD
 - "Raining Blood" Slayer, *Reign in Blood* CD
 - "Sex Objects" the Briefs, *Sex Objects* CD
 - "Hair of Gold, Skin of Blue" the Groovie Ghoulies, *Travels with my Amp* CD (Okay, so I have only so many CDs when I'm living away from home. Sheesh!)

Ryan Horky

1. Shang-A-Lang, *Sad Magic* LP
2. Marked Men, *Ghosts* LP
3. Chris Bell, *I Am the Cosmos* LP
4. Celtic Frost, *Morbid Tales* CD
5. Manilla Road, *Crystal Logic* CD

Sarah Shay

- Top 5 Bands/Artists I Wish I Had Known/Appreciated in High School*
1. Screeching Weasel
 2. The Ramones

3. Dead Kennedys
4. The Adicts
5. David Bowie

Sean Koeppen

Top 5 New Releases I'm Anticipating in 2010

1. Killing Joke, *Feast of Fools* (all original members!)
2. The Adolescents
3. Scream
4. Gang Green
5. The Freeze

Steve Larder

1. Skiplickers, self-titled EP
2. Cry Havoc, self-titled demo
4. Coke Bust, *Lines in the Sand* LP
5. Nortt, anything!

Steve

1. ELO, *Time* LP
2. *Dr. Who* DVDs
3. Kim Fowley, *Gold and Garbage* comps on Norton
4. Statues, *Holiday Cops*
5. She LP

Steve Hart

Top 5 Records I Listened to in 2009

- Red Rockers, *Guns of the Revolution*
- Killing Joke, *Killing Joke 2003*
- Kylesa, *Static Tension*
- The Professionals, *I Didn't See It Coming*
- Marc Ribot, *Asmodeus: Book of Angels*, Vol. 7

Todd Taylor

- Fleshes, *Brown Flag* LP
- Mean Jeans, *Are You Serious?* LP
- Dan Padilla, *A Collection, Not Perfection* LP
- Estranged, *Type Foundry Session 1* singles collection LP
- Delay, *Plain Language* LP
- Middle Class and Flyboys re-issue 7"s

Ty Stranglehold

- Top 5 "M" Bands (original incarnation only)
1. Misfits
 2. Marked Men
 3. McRackins
 4. Minutemen
 5. Minor Threat

Vincent Battilana

- Severance Package 7", demo, and live at Plea For Peace in Stockton, CA, with The Taxpayers
- Pangea, *Never Not Know Nothing 7"*
- God Equals Genocide, *It Wasn't Made for Us 7"*
- Psyched To Die, *Scatter Brained 7"*
- Boats live at Plea For Peace Center in Stockton, CA with a handful of other bands



45 ADAPTERS, THE: *Not One More Day: 7"*

After a quick glance at this 7" jacket, smattered with Fred Perry ensembles and a dedication to a carpenters' union, I was preparing myself for some run-of-the-mill, American-style oi. Thankfully, this is not the case. Actually, the 45 Adapters (questionable name choice aside) are infinitely more interesting than the bands they'd likely play alongside. Make no mistake, there are elements of gruff street rock present, but it's clear that these lads also have an ear for Jamaican ska and R&B, and it shines through not only in the music, but also in the production of the record. The recording alone sets this band apart from its peers, which is painfully necessary in a genre that is totally oversaturated and typically invariable. I'd definitely be interested to hear what else these guys have in store. —Dave Williams (Longshot/Contra)

A/V MURDER:

"Tourettes" b/w "Fight like a Man": 7"
If I had started that band that I always said I was going to start all those years ago, I'd be pretty pissed off at A/V Murder for biting our style. Stripped-down, dirgey punk rock with a slight hardcore influence and not a trace of melody to be found. Sir Henry Fiat would approve of the spazzed-out vocals here. Great stuff from what you would sort of expect from Tyrades and Baseball Furies members, but probably not Cococomo. —Juan Espinosa (Local Cross)

AIRFIX KITS:

"Playing Both Sides" b/w "Leaving": 7"
AIRFIX KITS: *Flex Time*: 7" EP

Ten years ago, I sneered at the idea of "singer songwriters," casting them off into the Yacht Rock camp of Loggins and Messina or post-Wings McCartney. But, as in this often cicada-short lifespan of many punk bands, it's a worthy enterprise tracing particular folks through their various bands, discovering which of their fingerprints were on the steering wheel of a particular musical conveyance. Airfix Kits emerge from the Giant Haystacks cocoon, vocally led by Allan, a British ex-patriot. The Airfix Kits shed many of the Haystacks' Minutemen-isms. Charming noodling is replaced by tighter, bouncier songs. And the reason I'm intentionally covering two 7"s in the same review is that they have a nice "snapshots of a time" feel to them. The 7"s work great by themselves, but played one after another, it's like several short stories—think of author Alan Sillitoe, if that helps—telling a larger one: of a man emotionally betrayed, a man trapped by his lack

RECORD REVIEWS



"After squealing like I'd just unwrapped a Cabbage Patch Kid on Xmas morning, 1983, I ushered my confused wife out of the way and excitedly fired up the record player."

—Dave Williams
At Both Ends: 2 x 7"

of ambition, a man who's surrounded by friends making bad decisions. It's reminiscent, in the best ways, of early Who, early Jam, and Gang Of Four: specific, but universal narratives played like actual lives are at stake... with a beat you can snap your fingers to. —Todd (*Playing Both Sides*/Dirtnap, *Flex Time*/Deranged)

AK-47: Self-titled: CD

Right off the bat, I will disclose that the members of AK-47 are friends of mine. That said, I feel that I can still review this properly since I was a fan of the band long before I met the personnel. AK-47 are a hardcore institution here in Victoria B.C., having released their first cassette back in 1997. Here we are, thirteen years later, and the band has just released what I can honestly say is their best. "But wait, Ty. You don't even like hardcore!" *Bullshit!* I hate that jock metal that seems to pass for hardcore these days. AK-47 is a prime example of what a hardcore band should sound like in 2010. Hard, fast, and brutal, the disc is relentless in its attack on the laundry list of ills in our society. Governments, corporations, religion, and racists all get a taste of the fury. The songs are quick blasts that are over before you know what hit you, yet the message is clear. There is no "cookie monster" growling and

"chugga-chugga" riffage here, just pure anger exploding in your ears. Imagine a spider monkey trapped in a small cage constantly poked and prodded by some clown with a stick. Well this disc is the soundtrack to the day that monkey gets out of that cage and exacts its revenge. It's the sound of the desperation of the situation mixed with anger and vengeance. To answer a question posed by a song on the disc: Yes. Yes I have wanted to curbstop my fucking boss from time to time. —Ty Stranglehold (Reason)

AL SCORCH:

This Lonesome World...: 7" EP

These four tracks from Chicago's Al Scorch And The Country Soul Ensemble are foot stamping and banjo shredding. Two songs are Scorch's own and the others are traditional tunes Scorch and company adapted. My favorite, "Betsy Bay," a Scottish sailing song, incorporates a violin and is rife with homesickness and longing. This snapshot of Al's talent, although impressive, makes me wish he employed the Ensemble more to cook up a truly potent folk punk brew. —Kristen K. (Let's Pretend)

ALKALINE TRIO: *This Addiction*: CD

Aw, man. Okay, I want to love this. I really do. This band has put out three

of my favorite records, and, while it often raises an eyebrow, *Crimson* is easily my favorite of the lot, so I'm not exactly adverse to their "spookier" side or their more recent forays into melodic rock territory. When I got wind that this new record was going to be a return to their "punk" sound (rarely a successful initiative), I was very cautiously optimistic. After one listen, I wasn't exactly floored. Song titles like "Dine, Dine My Darling" and "The American Scream" already had me cringing, and the rather uninspired, throwaway songs themselves certainly didn't make up for it. There are some great tracks on here, for sure (sadly, one being "Draculina"), but I fear that these three incredibly talented young men have crossed one step too far into cartoon territory. It's entirely possible that, in time, I will love this record (which happened with *Agony and Irony*), but my hopes ain't high. Dang. —Dave Williams (Heart & Skull)

AMISH ELECTRIC CHAIR:

Straight, No Chaser: CD

This five-song disc really packs a punch. Right off the bat, it took me back to the late '90s with a sound that's reminding me a lot of some of the bands on Dr. Strange in that era (The Marshes in particular) with a heavy dose of Anti-Flag's first couple records (you know, the ones where they were mad rather than sad). They're pissed off and rocking. There is something to be said for putting a socio-political message in your lyrics and not coming off like a preachy, whiny jerk. AEC pulls it off nicely. I really like this a lot and would hope there is a longer disc on the way. —Ty Stranglehold (Geykido Comet)

AMMUNITION:

Unity and Rebellion: CD

Here's something that I wasn't expecting to be writing. Ammunition is a band that is doing something new in the oi genre. Really. From the looks of the disc, it is pretty much the usual fare. Old English-style fonts, a group of skinheads, a skull, and a mean-looking dog. It was only after I played it that I realized that this was something special. Right off the bat, you notice that it's really quiet. It wasn't the mix, but the actual music. Low key, mid-tempo rock with the bass up front. Then the lyrics kicked in. The guy singing has a low, raspy voice and is almost whispering in his delivery. This in itself may not seem at extraordinary, but the lyrics themselves are what you would usually find on this kind of record, so it winds up being pretty amazing to hear someone so relaxed singing about storming the streets, standing and

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fighting, and hating the cops. It took me a couple of songs to wrap my head around it, but once I did, I really got into it. Cheers to you, Ammunition. You've managed to be original in a very static genre. -Ty Stranglehold (Class War)

ANALENA: *Inconstantinopolis*: CD

Wow. Analena—centered out of Croatia, and having been around for over a decade—is just spot on with this record. Wonderfully intricate melodies that give way to harsh, howling freakouts—dual guitar attacks and a vocalist who ranges from rich singing to acerbic shrieks and back. *Inconstantinopolis* is apparently their third full-length, alongside a handful of other releases as well, and they come across as a group of folks entirely on top of their game. There's an assured confidence here that's hard to deny. At times they remind me of old screamo acts like The Assistant and at others—particularly when they go from those melodically interwoven musical moments to a full-blown howling explosion—where they're wonderfully reminiscent of Submission Hold. I mean, the vocalist comes across at times as a dead ringer for Jen Throw-Up, which made me really enjoy this record and also more than a tad wistful for the old days. But all that aside, this is some absolutely ferocious and capable "post punk" with focus and energy to spare. The more I listen to it, the more involved and ambitious

it sounds. I rarely do this, but folks should head over to analena.org and check this band's stuff out. -Keith Rosson (Moonlee)

ASSHOLEPARADE:

Welcome Fucking Home: 7"EP

Prior to listening to this, if someone had told me that the Assholeparade of today still tore shit up the way they used to in the '90s, I would have cynically said that I would find that hard to believe. How many times have we seen our once-mighty heroes hang up their guitars only to wish they had never decided to strap them back on after listening to what years of hibernation had done to their songwriting capabilities? Assholeparade, I will never doubt you again for a second. Still true to form in their Septic Death by way of Infest delivery, not one of the seven songs here sounds like a rehashed version of any of their previous material. Now put the bong down and go get this! -Juan Espinosa (No Idea)

AURYN / FILTH MATTRESS: *Split: 7"*

Auryn: The perfect mix of dynamic hardcore and triumphant metal. Super exciting. Reminds me a bit of the old Ohio band Memento Mori. From Pittsburgh. One song. Filth Mattress: Crusty, simple punk with shred-metal leads. From Seattle, like Sir Mix-A-Lot. Two songs. The bands compliment each other well, but Auryn really gets the blood pumping.

Cool packaging with silkscreened cardboard and a paper sash. -CT Terry (Square Of Opposition)

BARRERACUDAS: *Self-titled: 7"*

This is the Barreracudas first 45 and in the time it has been sitting in my review pile, they've released at least one more record, possibly two. Don't let my laziness prevent you from picking up this 7", though, especially if you yearn for a return to the summer of '75 hanging out at the Mercer Arts Center. From the sound of this record, the Barreracudas have been tearing up Atlanta dive bars with glittery blasts of boozy glam rock that would make Johnny Thunders smile even at his most jaundiced. The A side, "New York Honeys," is a swaggering power pearl dripping with the lyrical agony of a guy giving his girl an ultimatum—"It's me or him, babe." The guitar playing is what you'd expect to find on a long-lost Hollywood Brats single. The flip side contains "Don't Get Me Wrong," a driving tune in the Real Kids vein that rips its guitar solo from a Cars song. Good, decidedly unclean fun. -Josh Benke (Douchemaster)

BEAUTIFUL MOTHERS, THE:

Chikara: CD

The first mistake I made with this album was thinking the band was Japanese. In my defense, the song titles are written in both Japanese and English. It was a fair mistake. This band is from Seattle, but the internet tells me they are very popular in

Japan. Hence the Japanese translations on the album cover. The second mistake I made with this album was listening to it at bedtime. This is not a bedtime album. This is an album of heart-clutching rock'n'roll. It sounds desperate and not in a bad way. The good kind of desperate, the kind that propels music forward and makes it an experience instead of just a recording. I think Japan is on to something. -Jennifer Whiteford (Tsurumi)

BI-FURIOUS: *Are Stoked!: CD*

Someone from Sass Dragons is in this band. Unfortunately, that didn't make me like it any more. There are some decent song titles like "Hurry Your Ass" and "Let's Smoke Crack," but the songs all just come across as one big blur. There's nothing here to make any of them stand out. I did like the letter in the insert, but that's not going to move any product this time around. -Sean Koeppenick (Let's Pretend)

BILL COLLECTORS: *"Hole in the City" b/w "Gold Medal": 7"*

Some great, trashy garage punk from Seattle. Inevitable comparisons to Estrus bands or dudes from Calgary like Von Zipper or The Mants. Love it! -Ty Stranglehold (Collectors Inc.)

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medicinal. The part of the burrito that runs down your arm? That's where all the vitamins are. This was recorded way before caffeine and taurine were taken out of Sparks. Beer = brain food. A motivational speech goes as following: "I like pickles! I like bunnies!" Supergroups = Damn Yankees. In April of 2005, Paddy Costello (D4), Mike Napkin (Observers), Davey (Tiltwheel), and Ben Snakepit (J. Church) oiled up their party bellies, shaved for battle, and got down to the business at hand of making... a purely American record. It's a paradox. It simultaneously supersedes and falls short of expectations. It's a mess, but it sounds chaotically alive. It's a clever gimmick—all the way, starting with the name—but it's not a joke record that lives out its welcome after a spin or two. If George Carlin grew up listening to Ass Rash, Battalion Of Saints, and the Effigies? Maybe. Dudes having fun, wanting dudes of both genders to have fun with 'em? That's the target demographic. "Did you just puke on the carpet?" —Todd (Little Deputy / Recess)

BOATS!: *Summer Vacation: 7" EP*

Boats! just blast out four perfect pogo punk pop songs on this 7". Think Cute Lepers with more emphasis on the fun. It can be a risky endeavor for bands trying to turn innocuous themes such as pool parties into punk anthems but Boats! do it without a hitch with the track, "Pool Party." Overall, this record reminds me of one those '80s National Lampoon movies for its perfect recipe of self-deprecation mixed with funny

and served with just the right amount of edge to hold the whole thing together. Ahhh, this is such precious vinyl. —N.L. Dewart (No Front Teeth, May Cause Dizziness, mcdrecords.com)

BOTOX RATS: *Modern Caesars: LP*

Good, solid snotty punk rock for fans of Pelado and Hostage Records. Features members of Disco Lepers, Shanghai Wires, and the Jabbs and would appeal to fans of Stitches, Smut Peddlers, Cute Lepers, or The Pegs in a big way. Reminds me a lot of a SoCal band I got a demo from about a decade back called the First Wave Boys. The music is herky jerky without being post punk and the vocals are high pitched without being whiny. Looks like they have a split single coming out with Duane Peters' Gunfight, so I am sure we will be hearing more from this band. —Mike Frame (Meaty Beaty, myspace.com/meatybeatyrecords)

BOUNCING SOULS, THE: *Ghosts on the Boardwalk: CD*

So this is the collection of the twelve songs that The Bouncing Souls released one-at-a-time on the first of every month over the course of 2009—a pretty cool idea that I did not keep up with, opting instead to hear them in their collected format. The result is a record that keeps right in line with the Souls' evolution. In the same world as *The Gold Record*, *Ghosts on the Boardwalk* has its share of killer fist-pumping sing-along anthems, a few weirder, slow rock'n'roll tracks that have become staples of their records, and

the requisite fast, goofy fun songs that the band always throws in the mix. So, ya, it's a Bouncing Souls record, which, for me, means that there are a few skippers, a few pretty good songs, and a handful of songs that I will love deeply forever. I guess I can't really complain about that. —Dave Williams (Chunksaah)

BROKEN NEEDLE: *Self-titled: 7" EP*

L.A. hardcore in the long Southern California tradition of the Middle Class to the Adolescents to Reagan SS: shouted vocals, pissed-yet-one-percent-hopeful lyrics, *Vicious Circle* guitar sound, drums as dense as mid-summer smog. Broken Needle, like Career Suicide, straddle a nice balance between of being unmistakably hardcore played by folks who have a deep and long understanding of it, while still being played with an urgency and an abandon that keeps them from being merely throwbacks to a time that really didn't exist. Bonus points for the archival and new Edward Colver shots on both sides of the sleeve, tying in the concept of tradition mixing with new blood. —Todd (Schizophrenic)

BROTHERS GROSS, THE: *Time to Go Now: CD*

Simple, yet solid '77 style pop punk a la FM Knives from this Indiana three-piece that includes an actual set of Brothers Gross, as the name suggests. The more rocking numbers explore the area mined out by the skinny tie sneer of 999, while an ever-present tambourine glosses everything over

with a pop sheen. More contemplative tunes, like "When the Lights Are Low" flirt with synths and female backing vocals, giving off a new wavey Buzzcocks feel to them. More natural than nostalgic, this is a fun listen. —Jeff Proctor (Bad Track)

CAPTAIN BLACK: *The Big Gulp!: CD-R*

Hooooo *shit!* "A pleasant surprise" would be the understatement of the year. I put this on, expecting the usual CD-R fare that I get a bunch of in every batch of stuff to review. It's usually NOFX ripoffs or weird outsider stuff from the Midwest or whatever. However, Captain Black is an entirely different story. This is amazing in every way. It takes me back to the mid-nineties. Back when No Idea was still a zine and I was just getting into bands like Radon. I guess that doesn't say much about the actual music, but what I'm getting at is that it has that kind of feel to it: a slack, quirky, heartwarming goodness. It's so passionate that it could only be played by people who are down for life. A life in punk, that is. It will make you immensely happy, slap a smile on your face after a long day of work, and remind you that punk is its own fucking reward. The lyrics are just amazing. They often relate the personal to the political. For instance, they sing about how they like to go fishing but find it harder and harder to get out of the urban sprawl to do it (possibly the first folks ever to attempt to rhyme fishing with gentrification.)

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But usually it's just stuff about living life to the fullest and how, in spite of all the bullshit we go through, it's worth it. Best punk release of the year! Hunt down this CD-R or just wait until they put out a record. You'll know when every Razorcake reviewer is going nuts about it. Or don't. I don't care what the fuck you do. I got my copy. Hell, this is the kind of band that breaks up before a record can even be put out anyway. Look, just find it and have another reason to be alive and punk. —Craven Rock (Self-released, myspace.com/captainblackahoy)

CATALYST, THE: *Swallow Your Teeth: 12"*

The Catalyst is the most exciting band in punk right now. I was completely blown away by the *Mariana's Trench 12"* they put out, and this record is even better. It's a definite progression, but they retain the same dirty aesthetic they've shown in the past. The heavy parts still remind me of the Melvins, and while there are nods to other influences that round out the album, the band has developed a sound all their own. "Small Town, Big Mouth" bleeds Scandinavian crust in the vein of End Of All while its follow-up track, "Werewolves of Washington," slows down to a near stop to allow the huge guitar riffs to soar over the rest of the music. The greatest thing is that in refining their sound, the band is even more capable of writing great songs that work on their own while building on each other in the context of an

album. This is a completely calculated, thought-out record that grips you like The Refused's *Shape of Punk to Come* or Circle Takes The Square's *As the Roots Undo*. This album is tomorrow's absolute classic. —Ian Wise (Perpetual Motion Machine)

CHANNEL 3: *To Whom It May Concern: LP*

Releasing demos can be a dicey prospect, but TKO's release of early Channel 3 demos is a real triumph and entertaining beyond the realm of just history. The range of playing spans slower, more rocking versions of classics like "I Got a Gun" and songs like "Late at Night" that are more in congress with what was evolving as the Southern California sound. The back of the album has a note from the band describing the record as "family snapshots," but the album holds up and is pretty essential for anyone wearing grooves into their Adolescents records. Bad Brains' *Black Dots* set a standard for essential "demo having." *To Whom It May Concern* keeps that standard alive nicely. —Billups Allen (TKO)

CHEAP GIRLS: *My Roaring Twenties: LP*

The Cheap Girls was a shiny beacon of clarity in the drunken haze that was North Park Awesome Fast. They were easily my favorite set of the weekend. I'll admit that I'm a bit of a sucker for a good power pop trio. Everyone in my house fell in love with their first album. Their second effort, *My Roaring*

Twenties, came out a few months after NPAF and I jumped on it. The rhythms are tight. The melodies and lyrics are beautiful. The guitar solos are distinctive without being masturbatory. Sometimes they take the place of choruses until the final verse. Cheap Girls remind me of the music I listened to in the 1990s. I don't mean god-awful grunge bands like Candlebox, but music they used to call "alternative" or "college" rock. They conjure up memories of spending idle time at coffee houses on rainy afternoons. These songs make me long for a cigarette and I quit smoking a year ago. "Hey Hey, I'm Worn Out" and "One & Four" are the tracks that follow me for days. —Joe Dana (Paper+Plastick)

CLOAK / DAGGER: *Don't Need a: 7" EP*

My introduction to this band was the terribly great *We Are* album that came out a few years ago and I haven't really looked back or heard a bad song since then. Three songs are on this disc, one of which is also featured on their latest album *Lost Art*. The other two are exclusive to this release only. I would dare to call this hardcore, though I'm sure some would say differently. It's fast but not thrashy and it's tough but not agro. The energy and passion is definitely there and that's more than I can say for what passes as hardcore these days. Let me also take time to thank the fine folks at Grave Mistake for including a download coupon for the songs on this record.

Spending as much time in my car as I do, I appreciate the convenience of having the songs burned onto a CD-R when I just can't wait to get home to listen to the vinyl. —Juan Espinosa (Grave Mistake)

CREEPS, THE / FEAR OF LIPSTICK: *Split: 7"*

When did bands from Ottawa get so good? I don't know, but I'm not complaining. This split 7" features four songs with fist-in-the-air choruses and driving guitars. There are also whoa-ohs, which makes it an automatic winner with me. This makes me eager to see each of these bands live as soon as possible. And they've thoughtfully included a lyric sheet, which makes me very, very happy. Good job, lads! —Jennifer Whiteford (Fucking Scam / Scared To Death)

CUTE LEPERS: *"You Don't Have to Belong to the Religious Right" b/w "Any Danger Love": 7"*

I'll fully admit I've been lazy in collecting the pieces of the post-Briefs (or "Briefs-on-hiatus") puzzle. I'm of two completely different minds with the Cute Lepers. *Mind Number One*: This should be sending me to the moon. Phil Spector-ish production, Elvis Costello-meets-slow-early-Clash sounds, the Elvis Presley green and pink color scheme for the name in the corner, the co-ed vocals. Oh-la-la. Someone did their homework. I definitely have a soft spot for dancing-in-the-front-row power pop stuff

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like this. And this 7" is definitely not bad or lacking. It's actually quite good: every "t" is dotted, every "i" is crossed. *Mind Number Two*: Forgive me for bringing up past transgressions, but some of those Briefs dudes were calculators immaculately dressed as true believers who wrote some catchy-assed songs. They'd previously nailed grunge with Green Apple Quick Step (anybody remember "Space Cocksucker"? How about their track on *I Know What You Did Last Summer*?). They landed two separate major label deals when the gettin's were somewhat good. The Briefs also yanked their entire past Dirtmap catalog and re-released it on BYO when it was still available on Dirtmap. So pardon me if I handle this with oven mitts, with a bit of caution, even though I like it. —Todd (1-2-3-4 Go!)

DAN PADILLA: A Collection, An Erection, Not Perfection: LP

In this roulette of time, circumstances, and finances, Dan Padilla—J.Wang, Gene Doney, and Davey Quinn—have released these songs in some way, shape, or form since the formation of Dan Padilla, a band named after a man who is not in the band. And although I have versions of these songs on split 7"s, the *Burrito* CD, and the limited-run *Foosball Club* CD that was made due to touring Japan—knowing that it's solid financial concept to sell things on tour in a foreign land—it's a comfort to have them all sidled up

next to one another in a long-playing 12" slab of colored vinyl that looks like streaked carpet underlayment. There's something entirely reassuring about this collection—that you've finally alphabetized your records, all your socks are matched up, the puke stain's finally off the ceiling, all the empty cans are in the recycling bin—and most, if not all, of your Dan Padilla songs have a nice place to roam around together. What's it sound like? Gruff-voiced, cuddly underbelly, hard-earned DIY punk with secret, catchy-yet-twisted, and drought-hardened guitar lines that scrape like running through a dense copse of chaparral. Includes three covers: Pretty Boy Thorson, Jesus And Mary Chain, and Old Crow Medicine Show. Orient your map to that. Meet you there. PS: Totally fucking with you on the *Erection* part of the album title. —Todd (Little Deputy)

DANTIEN: Self-titled: Demo CD-R

The map's creased at all the edges. On that map are little illustrations. Frankie Stubbs is wearing a raccoon hat and is holding a cocktail slightly askew. There's also a little icon of Paul Curran doing finger flips over a picture of a sun. At arm's length, the shape of California looks suspiciously like a slouching burrito humping Nevada from behind. What all this secret-decoder stuff means is that, as a demo, Dantien are set up right. They take cues from Leatherface, Crimphrine, and the East Bay, but there's enough

of their own sunshine and self-awareness to keep the map just that: a template of adventures to take, not a jail cell of previously-made music to nervously pace. The compass needle's pointing true north, intrepid explorers. Keep trailblazing your own path, get this thing mastered, and travel through Burritoformia and worlds beyond. —Todd (Self-released)

DEATH SENTENCE:

Not a Pretty Sight/Stop Killing Me: CD

Another long out-of-print Canadian band sees the light of day! Death Sentence were a Vancouver band who put out two LPs in the mid-'80s, both of which are seeing the light of day on CD for the first time now. Their debut, 1985's *Not a Pretty Sight*, is their best known material with staple tunes like "Death Squad," "Dawn of the Dead," and "R.C.M.P." Where most bands were leaning to the metal side of things during this era, Death Sentence sounded more like DOA's prime years, with a bit more British punk and a dash of rock'n'roll thrown in. *Stop Killing Me* came out in 1988 and is a slight departure from the previous record. The metal started to rear its ugly head. There's reverb on the vocals and some flange effects here and there. Thankfully, the tunes (for the most part) are still better than most of the '80s hardcore bands that decided to grow their hair out and get their guitar wank on. This disc is fully re-mastered and sounds great. Picking this up is highly recommended not

only from a historical standpoint, but for the fact that it truly rips! —Ty Stranglehold (Lazy 8)

DELAY: Plain Language: LP

Imagine a sped-up Weakerthans, with the high prairie Canadian cold being swapped out for a floating-on-air excitement. Perhaps a couple of balloons, for good measure. Fronted by two high-register twin brothers from Ohio, I get quick flashes of the wide-eye wonder of everything from early Redd Kross to Defiance, OH, and... well, it goes back to the Weakerthans. There's a nice, supple poetic feel to the pretty straight-forward pop punk songs that gives them a gentle, heart-felt aura without them sounding like treacle or being overly slick. Sounds handcrafted and gentle without being precious. I like it. —Todd (Salinas)

DESTRUCTORS 666:

Quisnam Vigilo Vigilo: CD

Well-produced and well-played UK punk ((and by "well-produced" i of course mean TURN THE FUCKING KICK DRUM DOWN, TOM)) that seems to be utterly obsessed with government surveillance, as if Dale Gribble joined GBH circa 1983 or something, then they fast-forwarded fifteen years or so into the future ((note clever Vibrators reference)) and recorded in the same studio in which the Libertines would record five years later, and cut an entire album based on the song "Brand New Age" by the UK Subs, although i suppose one could



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argue that "Brand New Age" by the UK Subs is already an entire album based on the song "Brand New Age" by the UK Subs, so perhaps there goes my entire argument. I haven't been able to get into much UK punk since 1982 or so ((with a few exceptions)), and i generally don't respond with vast effusions of gushiness in the presence of three-and-a-half-minute, big production punk songs, but, all things considered, i can't say i've heard anything better in this genre in years—and they cover the Vindictives and X-Ray Spex and totally nailed that saxophone part in the X-Ray Spex cover—so if that's your kettle of cod, buy with confidence and wave to the eye in the sky on your way out of the shop, mate. **BEST SONG:** "Spy In The Sky" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Rule Nanny Britannia," perhaps. **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Liner notes thank someone or something called "Barbie's Dead," which is also a song off the UK Subs "Brand New Age" album. —Rev. Nørb (Rowdy Farrago)

DEZERTER: Jak Powstrzymałem III Wojnę Światową, Czyli Nieznana Historia Dezertera: 2 x LP

When I think of punk in Poland, I think of Dezserter. I had heard them off their *Underground out of Poland* LP, something else that my brother has, various comps like the *World Class Punk* tape and *We Don't Want Your Fucking Poor* LP, and *Jak Punk to Punk* LP. This band started out

around 1981 and, from what I hear, continues on to this day. They played two shows in the U.S. last year on the East Coast that I was drooling over and was super jealous that I couldn't attend. From what I can tell, this is not a discography but more of a compilation of songs ranging from 1981-1993. You can hear their early, raw, straight forward punk beginnings to their progression to faster hardcore leanings and bringing in outside influences like reggae. My copy came on awesome white with grey swirl vinyl and was wonderfully packaged in a gatefold cover with a huge foldout poster lyric sheet. If you have heard my latest podcast, you know my current obsession is Polish punk. This is a welcome addition to the library that I'm currently accumulating. —Donofthedeat (Pasazer)

DI NIGUNIM: Balagan: CDEP

Di Nigunim is an anarcho-klezmer punk collective from San Diego. Politically and musically radical, Di Nigunim plays an intense brand of punk rock inspired by traditional Jewish music employing an expansive rotating roster of musicians who rip shit up on accordion, piano, sax, trumpet, and a fuck ton of drums. Think a more dynamic and rougher Gogol Bordello and you're on the right track. Traditional songs such as "L'Cha Dodi" and "Havenu Shalom" are sung in Hebrew with vocals from everyone, creating a sonic atmosphere of a socially lubricated and riotous

Jewish wedding. Throw this one on at your next socially conscious dance party. —Jeff Proctor (Drunken Goat)

DIOS MIO / BRING THAT SHIT!: Split: 7"

I always wonder what people mean when they say, "That band owns." If they mean that bands around them get blown out of the water, that they're a hard band to follow, that they can take a space over and make it their own, then Dios Mio owns this 7", hands down. Bring That Shit! fails to do what their name implies: seven short songs delivered in English and Spanish which fail to push the "lose your mind" button, or even entertain, really. Even their side of the layout left something to be desired. I was left bewildered as to why Dios Mio doesn't list a bass player, even though there's one in the live shot. Both bands seem to aim for brutally punk hardcore, but Dios Mio really hits the spot with great lyrics that remind you why you're pissed off and the hooks and choruses to back it up. The energy conveyed is very reminiscent of Avail's *Dixie* in its raw and honest approach to hardcore. —Rene Navarro (Bezerker / Give Praise)

DONALD THOMPSON: Pomp! Pomp! 7" EP

Ragin' two-guitar rocky punk that sounds like a youthful, non-Angelino version of those cocaine & whiskey ne'er-do-wells of the '90s like the Humpers and, uh, those guys that kind

of all sounded like the Humpers but weren't the Humpers. Except for the feedback and the vocals, which just sound like some highly motivated Italian kid trying to get stinkier. I don't really hear any massive hits here, but i'm a sucker for that one-note rapid-fire BINKBINKBINKBINKBINK piano like they have in "Bite My Ass" so i bang my veiny pink gavel and find in their favor. **BEST SONG:** "Bite My Ass" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Chalk Outline," because "Bite My Ass" isn't nearly as good as it could be if it were "Bite My Shiny Metal Ass" instead. **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Donald Thompson was a former Oklahoma district judge who got four years in jail for masturbating with a penis pump under his judge's robes while presiding over murder trials. *And they say America's a free country!* —Rev. Nørb (Tornado Ride/ Surfin'Ki)

ERGS!, THE / MEASURE [SA]: Split: 7"

Measure [SA]: A slower, shimmering song about isolation, ice, and creativity followed by a quick blast. For me, Lauren's voice is like a suture on a serious wound, holding and guiding the songs together with a fierce tenderness. Ergs!: Oh, yes, my friends, the Ergs! are still dead. This was recorded before *That's It... Bye!* A fast one and a slow one, giving this 7" the feel of a late Sunday morning instead of a late Saturday night. I'm waiting for the future where records come with morning coffee and a nice,



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sunny day. Until then, I'll just have to use the ol' imagination. Two DIY punk bands—even when they slow it down—at the top of their form. —Todd (No Idea)

ESKATOL: *Blodorn*: CD

You can't ignore music that is so intense sonically that it blasts your eardrums. This band from Oslo, Norway does not fuck around. They play a technically executed mixture of crust, d-beat, and metal. Gruff vocals lead the charge, backed by crunching guitars, forceful bass, and hard-driving drums. The production is key here. It's well recorded and nothing is out of place. What they master—that a lot of bands cannot achieve—is the underlying, memorable melody that keeps me listening. Their power is unmistakable. From start to finish, this is one enjoyable listen. I get the same feeling listening to this band as I do Skitsystem or Wolfbrigade. All I hope is one day is that this band tours the States and I can experience this live. —Donofthead (Kjepp Kjappesens Raske Skiver, diger.tigernet.no)

ESTRANGED, THE: *Type Foundry Session 1*: LP

It's a singles collection of the most-if-not-all-sold-out Estranged 7"s (and an unlisted track. I believe it's off their debut LP, *Static Thoughts*). At the moment, I'm putting the Estranged in the camp that's occupied by Eddy Current Suppression Ring, Hex Dispensers, The Young Offenders, and the Marked Men.

Stylistically, they're nothing alike, but their approaches to the heart of music are similar. Oh, one could say, "That's nothing new," and they wouldn't be wrong. But they'd be more wrong than right. (It's not squeaky intergalactic balloon music played with vacuum cleaners in a tonal range that's aimed at making your pancreas quiver. Or a "whathaveyou.") The Estranged are exploring the dark ventricles of music that was usually accompanied with a brooding synthesizer. Think Bauhaus or Sisters Of Mercy, but by died-in-the-wool punks shorn of spookiness and frilly-edged shirts. Artful pretense is replaced by hard-edged instruments and scuffed boots. And, away from the comfortable trappings of an already created subculture and the genre limitations that come with them, The Estranged make music that is pumping intriguing, rare blood in real time. I'm super glad that these songs are staying in print. I figure the more people getting into The Estranged, the better. —Todd (Dirtnap / Black Water)

FAST BOYS: *RockNRoll Trash*: CD

...meaning no disrespect to anybody up or down the food chain, but i'm kinda viewing the whole Poison Arrows/Cute Lepers fatal OD thing as kind of the Altamont for this kind of music ((and when i say "this kind of music," i apparently mean some kind of post-Exploding Hearts punk/glam/rock & roll dealie-do where everyone has tight pants, studded belts, chain wallets, and creepers.

And really nice guitars. Oh, and hair brushes, too)). I mean, the Poison Arrows played in Green Bay about a week before that whole deal went down, and, even then, you could tell that people were just sort of...i dunno, for want of a better word, *smirking* at the whole Renaissance Faire aspect of the whole deal. Don't get me wrong, it's not an inherently bad look—hell, i freely admit that if i could honestly pull off the whole "looking like a Bay City Roller as drawn by John Holmstrom" look, i'd probably do it, too—it just doesn't seem like this is the way productive, vital cogs in the rock'n'roll bioorganism *look* right now, it seems, at this second, that it's more like people being tethered to/frozen into whatever aesthetic template they decided was Boss and Gear after they heard "Guitar Romantic" or something ((and if OD-gate is this music's Altamont, i'm thinking the Exploding Hearts tragic van crash is more like Elvis going into the Army than it is Buddy Holly's plane going down, but these analogies are beginning to verge into the realm of the pointlessly insensitive so fuck it)). Anyway, enough high level shit. I neither hate nor wish to hate this record, but, for the cry-yi, could you POSSIBLY have thought of a more generic band name? And could you POSSIBLY have come up with a more generic album title?? I mean, i'd be depressed if i found out that "Fast Boys" and "RockNRoll Trash" were anything other than the result

of some software program designed to scientifically and mathematically calculate the most generic possible results to the queries of "CREATE BAND NAME" and "GENERATE ALBUM TITLE." Still, this record isn't bad—it's reshaped, generic and overplayed, but it still isn't *bad*—and in between the mewling about "rock 'n' roll trash" and—i dunno, was it "Main Street" or "The Boulevard" or am i just *assuming* there's a song that mentions "Main Street" or "The Boulevard" because it would be some kinda violation otherwise?—there are a few sorta memorable tunes ((“Wanderer” appears to mention a jukebox, “Grown Up Blues” is kinda good, and “Won’t Let Me Kiss Her” would be *really* good except that it’s sorta wrecked by some, frankly, awful backup vocals)) and the album does seem to pick up steam as it shambles along...but that plug is swiftly pulled when the band opts to include, for whatever reason, a humdrum cover of “New Rose” towards the end of side two. DUDES, WHAT THE FUCK??? *You don't cover a fuckin' completely ubiquitous punk classic on your album! Ya put something like that on the b-side of a three-song 45! What's your big idea for the next record, start side one off with "Blitzkrieg Bop"???* I mean, JESUS! Couldn't you even hit us up with “So Messed Up” or something??? You gotta do the HIT??? What fuckin' Rock School did YOU fail outta??? Well anyway... yeah. Pretty Boy, Nasty, Cocoa, Fitz

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and Mikey, i salute you: "RockNRoll Trash" is officially the first record of this genre's post-Altamont era. Good luck with that. **BEST SONG:** "Won't Let Me Kiss Her" minus the bad backing vocals. **DUMBEST SONG TITLES:** "Fast Boys DTK" "Rock N' Roll Trash" "Late Nights" "Gettin' Off" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** "Recorded at Crystal Rain in South Carolina by a mullett (sic) -headed jackass" -Rev. Nørb (Zodiac Killer)

FLESHIES: *Brown Flag*: LP + CD

Pure speculation: John Geek, the singer for the Fleshies, has found an inner happiness and resolve. This is the most posi Fleshies record, by a landslide. Also, the pseudopodal separation of Triclops! from the "don't call it a comeback, we've been here all along" Fleshies has completed. Triclops! (a band that features many of the same members of the Fleshies) takes care of all the huge and loud and longer tangents. Fleshies takes care of the smart whips of weird pop sensibilities. Explanation: Fleshies have been grooming an AC/DC meets direct-to-the-central-nervous-system form of DIY punk for years. This is their most singularly focused effort. I'm making another assumption that the cover of this album is a close-up of some mold or fungus or something. It sorta looks like asphalt on first glance. But when it's all blown up, the little details that you'd most likely miss if you glance at the mold at arm's length start

revealing intricate details and patterns and neat stuff. And that's what this record sounds like, in a purely Fleshies way. Definitely recommended. -Todd (Recess / Sugar Mountain)

FLYBOYS:

"Crayon World" b/w "Square City": 7"

The Flyboys' story is tragic, and this tragedy has, quite possibly, kept them mainly as a footnote in Southern California's punk rock history. Right around when their self-titled, seven-song 12" EP was released on Frontier, the keyboardist/vocalist, David Wilson (noted on this record as David Way), was killed in an automobile accident. Another version of the band, called the Choir Invisible, would later resurface. The drummer, Dennis Walsh (punk name Dennis Rackett), would go on to join the long-running Huntington Beach stalwarts, The Crowd (*Razorcake* #2's cover band). This is a re-issue of their first 1979 self-released 7" (Flyguy Records) and it has the feel of a band that was comfortable straddling between the not-yet-concrete-wall separation between new wave and punk. Within half a year of this 7" coming out, and the bands existing within thirty miles of one another, the Knack would score a worldwide hit with "My Sharona." The Flyboys remain largely obscure. What I didn't know is that The Flyboys were the first day-glo punks in California—often called "the male Go-Go's"—encouraging their fans to have fun, instead of acting

disinterested or spitting at them. Great stuff. Well worth bloodhounding down. -Todd (Frontier)

FRANTIC HEART OF IT, THE:

Self-titled: CD

There was a short-lived East Bay pop punk band from the early oughts, Fenway Park, that played some deliciously syrupy power pop that borrowed quite liberally from Elvis Costello And The Attractions, but added some strings and schmaltz to the equation. These three Pittsburgh dudes expand upon what Fenway Park started, adding even more intricate and floral orchestration. Heartfelt power pop and pop punk songs here benefit from addition of keys, glockenspiel, accordion, and cello. Some tracks are guitar-heavy pop punk, reminiscent of the Methadones; others recall the pub rock that preceded Elvis Costello. Later Faces albums come to mind. And in the more tender moments, there are bits of Cat Stevens. When I was thirteen I would have kicked myself in the dick for saying that and considering it a complement, but times have changed. There's also a bonus track cover of Jawbreaker's "Ache" that probably could have been left off, but that's a minor grievance. Overall, this is a very lovely, lovingly crafted album. However, I am a bit curious as to how they pull the lush sound off live between just the three of them! -Jeff Proctor (Atomic Family)

FRANZ NICOLAY:

St. Sebastian of the Short Stage: 10"

Wow, if ever there were a case of one side of a record being really pretty good and the other side totally sucking, this would be it. Franz Nicolay used to be the keyboardist in Hold Steady and the accordionist for World/Inferno Friendship Society. The first side of this record (appropriately labeled "The Fun Side") is heavy on the World/Inferno vibe, but the second side is slower and really, really not my thing. But I think the whole record might be redeemed by one song: "The Ballad of Hollis Wadsworth Mason Jr.," about a character in *Watchmen*, a DC comic book series/graphic novel. If this were a cereal, it'd be kasha (a Russian cereal, in keeping with the general Eastern Europe folksy vibe of the first side (really and truly, just think World/Inferno on this one), followed by some sort of cereal that would indicate slowness, maybe something overly ponderous. Special K Vanilla Almond? My cereal references are failing me here. Oh, the tragedy. -Maddy (Team Science)

FULL OF FANCY:

Sweet Baby Jesus: LP

Full Of Fancy's sound is a cross between The Muffs and Liz Phair. This album has a grand mix of straight-ahead power pop tunes such as "Los Angeles, Louisiana" and "Human Pudding," to more indie-rock inspired tunes such as "Stone's Throw" and "Hot Tub." I love how Erin's

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(bassist) and Miranda's (guitarist) vocals harmonize. My favorite song is "Girls Don't Cry," a poignant tune about unrequited love with the sad confessional chorus, "I do I do I do anything you want me to. I do I do I do anything for you." Full Of Fancy's song writing palate even ventures into some harder-hitting numbers, thanks to Evan's pounding drums on the track "Mikey Says." There's not a bad song out of the batch of twelve tracks here. —N.L. Dewart (No Breaks)

GAY, GAY, GAY, GAY BONERZ:

Self-titled: 7" EP

This band is actually lightyears tighter and more competent than one'd imagine a band called "The Gay, Gay, Gay, Gay Bonerz" who do songs named "Trees are Bonerz" should be; then again, aren't boners—er, *bonerz*—the sworn enemy of "tight?" I mean, in the grand Ro-Sham-Bo of sexual affairs, TIGHT compels MOUTH; MOUTH covers BONER, and BONER wrecks TIGHT. Where do these guys imagine they've heard different? And the line in "Trees are Bonerz" that mentions a "vagina in the sky"—dude, that is the most ass-backward thing i've heard since i booty-called Zatanna. Trees ARE bonerz, of course ((everybody knows that)), but they are *fucking the EARTH*. I mean, look at the top of any given tree. THAT is UNQUESTIONABLY the pubic hair part, not the dinghole part. AM I NOT CORRECT IN THESE ASSERTIONS??? Further, what kind of band calls themselves "The Gay,

Gay, Gay, Gay Bonerz" and then has double-tracked guitar solos with a *different guitar part in each channel*? I'm no expert on the situation, but that doesn't seem very Gay, Gay, Gay, Gay Bonerz to me. Whatever it is this band thinks they're doing, they seem to have mastered—all the same, i'll probably give these bonerz a lick and a promise until they release a record worthy of their great promise—like a split with the Fearless Iranians From Hell or something. **BEST SONG:** "Precum" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Trees are Bonerz" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Band's name is misspelled "Gay, Gay, Gay, Gay BONERS" on the front cover. Gay. —Rev. Nørb (Diva Haus)

GUILT TRIP: *Outrageous Claims*: LP

Holy fuh-uh-uhhhk! Absolutely ripping album! I was asleep for twenty years, it seems, since I missed out on their previous EP, but as I was shaving off my Rip Van Winkle-length beard, I had this playing in the background. By the time I put on the second side, I had more than a few cuts and scrapes from allowing this record to become the focus of my attention instead of the needed grooming job. Look, enough for a minute with all creative writing and attempts at being witty, let's all agree there's just a lot of "okay bands" out there. Too many, really. Then there's a small handful of truly awesome bands out there. Guilt Trip are one of those truly awesome bands. And this is one of those albums that in five to ten years

when you put it on for another listen, you're not going to ask yourself in confusion, "Why did I buy this piece of shit?" Instead, you're going to react to it the same way you did when you heard it the first time, "Oh, fuck yeah. This record is awesome!" Ten songs of full-on hardcore punk that hearkens back to the members' previous bands (Tear It Up, The Rites, and Fast Times), only updated a wee bit. Solid musicianship, bleak (and great!) lyrics, and a manic vocal style. The last song, "Bitter Sweet Nothing," goes off into Black Flag territory with a slow, sludgy tempo and words of despair. Other than that, the delivery is fast and urgent. Awesome, awesome, awesome! —M.Avrq (Absent)

HARLEY'S WAR: *Cro Mag*: CD

The title proclaims this as "Hardcore All Stars" and, as one may guess from the cover, Harley from the Cro Mags is the main member. Features Vinnie Stigma from Agnostic Front on some tunes as well. This is thirty-two songs, comprised of twelve new songs, a 1982 Harley solo demo, and a live set from CBGB. There is also a live DVD of shows from NYC, Japan, and Germany. Fans of NYHC already know they want this. —Mike Frame (MVD Audio)

HOUSE BOAT:

***The Delaware Octopus*: CD**

I'm going to go out on a limb and say that House Boat are basically the Pinhead Gunpowder for the next generation of pop punk nerds: Four

dudes from other notable bands of the genre (ranging from broken up to full-time active) coming together to make a record every once in a while, and play the occasional shows. While I love a lot of these bands (like Rivethead, Copyrights, Dear Landlord, etc), I personally find myself relating to Grath's songs a little bit more, since they usually revolve around being unhappy about your temp job, and immediately falling head over heels over every girl you pass on the street. For the completely out of the loop, think if Off With Their Heads embraced the fact that they're a pop punk band a lot more, and were less dramatic. —Joe Evans III (It's Alive)

IMPALER: *Cryptozoology*: CD

I will never understand why more people are not absolutely insane about this band. Since the early '80s, they've been delivering their own sinister blend of shock rock, combining '70s punk and '70s metal with single-minded dedication. I'll admit that I didn't really know much about them until a few years ago—when I moved to their homeland of Minnesota and went to one of their shows—which turned into the most insane rock'n'roll brawl I've ever seen. When I see a band that makes insane music back it up with real life insanity, I'm in for keeps. Of course, it doesn't hurt that their music is consistently awesome, and this new album is one of their best. It's a concept album about cryptids, featuring songs about chupacabras, Jersey devils,

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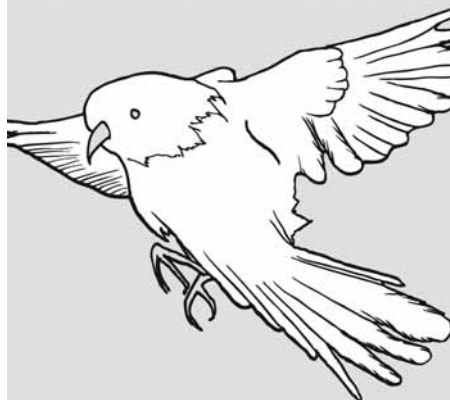
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and the like. There's even a trilogy of Bigfoot songs. The message here is clear: These beasts are not cute and friendly. They're fucking monsters, and the songs sound absolutely vicious; the way songs about monsters should sound. —MP Johnson (MVD)

IN-SANE:

Trust These Hands...Are Worthless: CD
Who knew bands from Slovenia could rock hard? I'd be hard pressed to find that country on a map, but maybe I should visit sometime to check these guys out live. But, for now, I have this release and it will have to do. Furiously paced drumming, heartfelt vocals, and overall creative songwriting went into the batter in this cake. I hear some Dag Nasty guitar influence in here and it brings a solid groove to the party. "Fail Safe Fail" is probably my favorite track on here. And they even end it with a tight instrumental. Impressive, gentlemen. Most impressive. —Sean Koeppenick (Moonlee)

INTRO5PECT: Record Profits: CD

Generally speaking, of course, I don't like electronic music. My reason is the usual complaints: it's devoid of the human element, thus it doesn't have an emotional connection or feel to it. So it leaves me bored. A lot of my friends make and base a lot their lives around electronica or techno. They think punk is redundant, stagnant and have a whole lot of evidence that it's just kind of dumb. Fair enough. It is a lot of the time, but techno is full of

E'd-out, apathetic, rich... wait, wait, wait, let's not split hairs. Instead let's ask, "Can middle ground be met?" Well, Intro5pect have got the right idea, but, unfortunately, it doesn't rise above the bullshit of either camp. The lyrics are just goddamn stupid: "Fuck your flag and fuck your pride," or "fuck the system and tear it down." I'd be embarrassed as hell to play this for anybody who isn't into punk because it would just back up their prejudice. On top of that, it's so completely clean that it comes off as sterile. It's really fucking overproduced. Like Blink 182 overproduced. The blending of genres sounds completely intentional. As if they were thinking, "Why don't we mix with this and do a techno-punk band?" rather than just being a bunch of people jamming out together and coming up with something. If only they could have made the crossover. The ravers have always got the good drugs. —Craven Rock (A-F, a-frecords.com)

IRON CHIC: Shitty Rambo EP: 7"

I reviewed (and greatly enjoyed) Iron Chic's demo tape in these very pages last year, so when I saw this sitting in the bin at HQ, I jumped for it. What you get here is four melodic, pop punk anthems with intriguing leads and hearty vocals sung in unison on a pretty slab of grey marble vinyl. This is certainly a fine release, but while I don't want to say I'm disappointed, I do think that Iron Chic is perhaps not realizing their full potential with this one. I saw them jump on a basement

show last minute at last year's Fest and thought they were one of the standout bands of the whole weekend, where this 7" sounds a little too much like the rest of Fest for me. Pick it up and give it a shot, *Razorcake* readers, as it's still worth a spin. For you, Iron Chic, you've got a good foundation. Let's build on it. —Jeff Proctor (Dead Broke)

JON COUGAR CONCENTRATION

CAMP: My Brain Hurts: LP

The story behind this record is that while Chris Fields was recording the new record by the Bugs (featuring former Queers/JCCC band mate Dave Swain), Chris and Dave used the extra studio time, got together, and recorded Screeching Weasel's legendary *My Brain Hurts* (don't tell anyone, but *Wiggle* is actually my favorite SW record) as a surprise birthday present for international pop superstar Josh Mosh (of Sunnyside and the Phuzz). Josh Mosh then told Chris that the record was rad and suggested he put it out. Luckily for us, Livid Records agreed with J-Mo's recommendation and this shit is out on vinyl for your listening pleasure. (And luckily for me, I got to catch them play a couple of these at North Park Awesome Fast this summer. Two times!) Limited to 500 with artwork by Cristy Road, who beautifully did the artwork for Recess's re-release of *My Brain Hurts* earlier this year, as well. The songs here retain all of the charm of the originals, plus get a little kick in the pants by the Cougar's leather jacket swagger. Chris'

vocals are gruff and gritty and ripping solos fly throughout the record. Stand-out tracks include "Guest List," "I Can See Clearly," "The Science of Myth," and, of course, "My Brain Hurts." This comes highly recommended. —Jeff Proctor (Livid)

KICKSTARTS: Self-titled: 12" EP

Rick from the Casualties seems to be the leading force behind this band, although there's a touch more rock'n'roll here than in his other band. You can shake your fist to it, and what more can you ask for these days? Well, I guess songwriting and musicianship, but you can find that elsewhere. Anybody who listens to street punk for songwriting and musicianship is a dick. If you're a Casualties fan, you might want to grab this one quick. Koi Records' slogan is "Our records sell out... but we don't!" —MP Johnson (Koi, koirecords.com)

KING FRIDAY: Married Alive: CD

Clean my slate. That pretty much sums up what King Friday does to me. It's a break from reality... not like a smoke break... more like another time and place. I shake my head, open my eyes again, and remember who I am. For me, the highlight of this CD is "Canadian Money." It's a must-listen pop gem of a lifetime. It's the true sound of pumped-up kids bouncing off the wall. Crank this short song and hit repeat. When it ends, I feel like I just got off of that red spinny thing at the playground and I'm trying to walk straight. These are

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the kind of songs that stay with you for many years. I know because I have been listening to some of them for many years and they have stood the test of time. King Friday used to slay the crowd at the Hardback in Gainesville, FL on a regular basis. We all wanted to see what they would do next, and they never disappointed. The beginning of "Carrot on a Stick" is so amazing that I appreciate it again every time I hear it. Some of the songs on this record were new to me. The surprise hit of the new songs for me was "Mexico." "I think you lie most of the time" says Jeff London, King Friday's fearless lead singer. This record will be a classic in my life for many years to come. I can't wait to hear the next chapter. What is it about these songs that bring me to where King Friday takes me? Is it the way the melody rides the chords? The way the chords build to a destination? The way it all crashes on the shore of an island all of its own? Who knows...Who cares? They're magically delicious. Get a pair of big speakers from your local Goodwill Industries store and crank this. —Dave Rohm (Fast Crowd, FastCrowdRecords.com)

KRAPPY DRAKULA, THEE / FARMS IN TROUBLE: Split: 7"

Well paired 7" of quirky, lo-fi minimalist punk. Thee Krappy Drakula kinda sounds like Giant Haystacks recorded on a boombox, with echoes of D. Boon sheen on the guitar and the squealing feedback of

the Velvet Underground humming in the background. First song on the Farms In Trouble side, "Employment History," is the winner on this side with tape loop magic and a yodeled hook. The other tunes are less melodic, jagged, angular shards of off-kilter, but still listenable weirdness, like backing tracks from Chuck Jones' futuristic '60s *Tom and Jerry* cartoons. —Jeff Proctor (Eeeffin'/Activities)

LAWRENCE ARMS, THE: Buttsweat and Tears: 7"

Despite the weakness of the record's art and design (seriously, who at Fat is responsible for this recent glut of faux-'70s crud? It's garbage! Stop it!) and the lame-the-first-time title, this band still slays. More importantly, ten years together and they're getting noticeably better. That's the part that still throws me. I thought their last full-length, *Oh Calcutta!* was arguably their best effort and this new four-songer (five if you count the digital-only song that's available at Fat's website) is right up there. The hooks are wickedly sharp and reaching, the lyrics tackle regret and joy and throw them together in a cement tumbler, and the music itself, to me, would be considered pop punk only loosely at this point. There's a lot more depth and ferocity here than a label like that implies. From the familiar (restlessness and torpor in "The Slowest Drink in the Saddest Bar...") to the newly explored (the flatly menacing country vibe threaded throughout "The Redness in the

West"), this record's one of the best things they've ever done. Awesome times three. —Keith Rosson (Fat)

LE KID ET LES MARINELLIS: "T'es pas d'ici" b/w "Camille": 45

Goodness gracious great balls of Jerry Lewis Telethons, it's a Franco-Phonic poppy punksmack, and a welcome one at that!!! The a-side sounds like "Et Moi, Et Moi, Et Moi" by the Sniveling Shits, processed via the voice and ding-a-ling catchiness of America's favorite Belgian, Plastic Bertrand, but recorded with the punch and crispness of The Boys, who never got to learn any French because they took technical drawing instead. There is something wonderfully insidious about a truly catchy French punk tune—sorta like huffing laughing gas whippets while a weird man in a trench coat shoves crepes in your back pocket and tells you not to waste the whipped cream or something—and rarely has glorious Francophonic insidiousness been gloriously nor insidiously. The b-side is more of a *Nuggets*-styled sixties thingie, but authentic enough in its minor-chorded tin can squawk to sound more or less carbon-datedly authentic as such. The sleeve could use some shiny jellybean colors on it, but, that said, this is pretty much the French equivalent of a home run, or triple at bare minimum. *Olé!* BEST SONG: "T'es Pas D'ici." BEST SONG TITLE: "T'es Pas D'ici," because i could actually figure out what it meant. FANTASTIC

AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: There's a download code printed right on the fricking label of this record. Wish i woulda figured that out before i forced my worn-to-a-nub needle back on my USB turntable to rip it to my hard drive. Amusingly, their own label fucks up the spelling of the a-side in the MP3 info tag, butchering it as "T'est Pas Ici"—which translates, if Google can be believed, to "thee not here." *Odds botkins!* —Rev. Nørb (Telephone Explosion)

LEGION / MAMMOTH GRINDER: Split: 7"

This is a good example of a split release done right. Legion from Birmingham, AL (members of Die Young and Coliseum) and Mammoth Grinder from Austin, TX (members of Hatred Surge) both play heavy, fast hardcore music in similar styles, but each are strong enough to hold their own on their respective sides. Legion follow up their debut 7", *Saviour*, with two brand new tracks of intense, stop-and-start hardcore with great dual guitar arrangements—as well as killer bass lines throughout—with a strong Integrity influence. The vocals are absolutely livid. Mammoth Grinder are a little more straight forward but still have a lot of range and remind me of an American Cripple Bastards. They have a new album coming out soon on Relapse and tons of tours, so watch out! —Ian Wise (Nuclear Solution, nuclearsolution.blogspot.com)

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LET'S DANCE: *Calling All Cars: 7" EP*

Although i gotta give 'em points for bringing back my favorite punk rock 7" format—the “Nervous Breakdown” single-song A-side and triple-song B-side—I got to say that this is the *least* “Let’s Dance”-y sounding Let’s Dance i could imagine without making bizarre leaps of improbable fancy involving heavily plumaged Brazilian Oi showgirl bands recreating Busby Berkeley musicals on mounds of sacrificed goat corpses ((which might, come to think of it, sound at least tangentially “Let’s Dance”-y at that)). I mean, it’s basically a bunch of fast punk bellyaching about the cops and shit...there’s a little organ at the beginning of “Out On Top,” but Chris Montezishness this, in large part, ain’t. The “hit”—4:17 worth of single song A-side—is “Calling All Cars,” which starts with an intriguing, almost “Six Pack”-esque slowly accelerating build up, replete with police sirens. It’s pretty fuckin’ cool for the first minute, really, until the proceedings proceed for such duration as to lead the listener to speculate as to the likelihood of “Calling All Cars” being a ((gasp!)) four-minute plus punk *instrumental*. Somewhere around the 1:50 mark, the vocals actually and finally kick in; alas, the verbal juice—the roundly unbrilliant “THEY’RE CALLING CARS! THEY’RE CALLING CARS! THEY’RE CALLING ALL CARS!”—ain’t really worth the squeeze at this point, so the last two-thirds of the song really never has a chance to live up to the bold promise extended by the first third

((note clever Neal Cassady reference)). Generally, it kinda sounds like the Methadones taking remote mental control of Rites of Spring’s bodies or something...i don’t necessarily dislike it but this band leaves me more interested in spot varnishing than dancing at this point. BEST SONG: “Calling All Cars” ((well, at least the first part)) BEST SONG TITLE: “X-Ray Eyes” FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: My favorite thing to yell before the break in the song “Let’s Dance” is “Okay, Web-head!” —Rev. Nørb (No Front Teeth)

LITTLE FYODOR: *Peace Is Boring: CD*

Little Fyodor muses about death, sickness, war, uncomfortable clothes, and sucky friends on *Peace Is Boring*. Little Fyodor’s eclectic choice of topics is as kooky as his live stage show, where he performs with “Lady Babushka.” Fyodor dresses in righteous psychedelic throwback suits and has a head full of untamable red, white-man fro hair while he relentlessly blasts through his crazy songs. I’m a fan of his style. Take the track on this album, “All My Clothes Are Uncomfortable.” It seems like nothing more than an annoying forty-eight-bar mantra, but one has to listen to the very end of the song to understand he was only repeating the song title over and over to make a metaphor for his friendships with the line, “All my friends are irresponsible. They’re either too loose or too tight.” Fyodor has been kicking his brand independent punk around

Denver for a long time and—if you’re like me and like unabashedly crazy music—he won’t disappoint you.

—N.L. Dewart (Public Eyesore)

LOVE SONGS: *Another Guaranteed 40 Minute Music Set: LP*


Mark this up as not necessarily Love Songs’ fault; that our date didn’t go so well due to mismatched personalities. 1.) Metal guitar virtuosity and I do not get along. I’m unimpressed by Eddie Van Halen mostly due to having to choke his licks down from blunt overexposure from sixth to twelfth grade, growing up in a rural high desert town. 2.) Spam Records-style rockin’. Oh, it’s rockin’, but it’s jokey and then not jokey, and I’m often left shruggin’ and not compulsively pulling those records out and playing them all the way through. Is that broccoli fencing on that dude’s belt buckle? Yup. 3.) “Weird Al” Yanokovic-style spasticity from song-to-song and inside of songs. Is that a well-played trombone? Oh, yes, it is. Is that a held falsetto? Why, yes, it is. Was that a genuine guitar solo? (See 1.) Everything is played, recorded, and mastered exceptionally well, and although I’m trying to not let it get to me, I’m getting annoyed. Sorry. I’m sure they’re just having a lot of fun. —Todd (Little Deputy)

LOVETAPS: *Love ‘Em or Leave ‘Em b/w Goodbye Sunshine: 45*

The first time i heard this a-side, i really would have sworn that i was listening to

some great old punk 45 from late ‘77/early ‘78 ((and, by that, i mean a REAL punk 45 from an ACTUAL band who might’ve recorded two songs in the real world in late ‘77/early ‘78, not some leopard-spotted-safety-pin cartoon thing that likely only happened in your imagination))—catchy tune, slightly underproduced, dueling pub-rockish guitars, occasionally incomprehensible lyrics that seem good, even though you really have idea what the fuck he’s saying ((though i’m about 90 percent sure that “*don’t you ever come out alone?*” is the hook))—it just seemed no-frills classic, like the songs on that Beggar’s Banquet “Streets” compilation ((which remains one of my favorite punk comps to this day)) or something. I was actually kinda dumbfounded when i found out it was a modern band, though, with repeated listening, i’m not so sure what i found so dumbfounding about that. IT JUST HAS THE ESSENCE OF CLASSICNESS, DUDE. B-side is more of a downtempo sixties moper, which seems to be a growing trend amongst b-sides these days. Amazingly nowhere cover art will require extra diligence on the part of the consumer; i assure you that there is no possible way you will take notice of this record in a 45 bin unless you are specifically hunting for it. *SO SPECIFICALLY HUNT FOR IT!* BEST SONG: “Love ‘Em or Leave ‘Em” BEST SONG TITLE: Both song titles—AND the cover art—suck. *Yet i assure you it is a great record!* I also assure you we are open. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Insert

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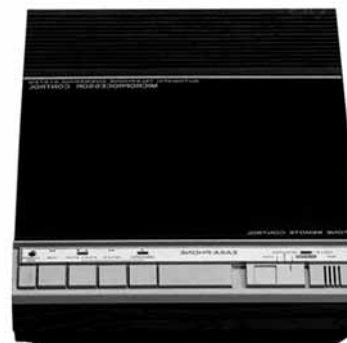
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features an image taken from the "Where No Man Has Gone Before" episode of *Star Trek*, which was, in fact, the show's second pilot and the first episode with Captain Kirk. —Rev. Norb (Super Secret)

MAYFLOWER: *Lighter Fluid*: 7"

I love reviewing records that fit what I call The Razorcake Sound: pop punk with gruff vocals, played as if the band's lives depended on rocking it. I implore you readers to check it out and then I get that satisfying feeling like when you set two cool friends up on a date and they start going out, or you take a buddy with specific taste in food to a favorite restaurant and they love it. So, there you have it. Mayflower is from upstate New York. They pound out three songs of melodic punk. I wish they'd come to Chicago and play with Canadian Rifle and some iteration of This Is My Fist. I just took a break from writing this review to get up and play this record again. —CT Terry (Mayflower)

MAYYORS: *Deads*: 12" EP

Bloody, fleshy, mechanical sounds cranked through amps and instruments with primal, nauseating beauty. The self-disgust of mankind—200,000 years of displeasure—takes the form of annihilated garage punk. The day before I saw them play, the bass player had accidentally cracked a girl's head open during their set. They were shaken up, but it was still barn burner of a set. —Daryl (Self-released)

MEAN JEANS: *Are You Serious?*: CD

Whoah! The dumb knob is pegged at twelve and it comes with its own party pants. This is making both the Spits and the Trashies look like, well, not like geniuses, but a bit smarter. It's sorta like if *Mad* magazine came with a soundtrack or Alfred E. Newman started a band with *Stir Crazy*-era Gene Wilder and Joey Ramone. Stooooooooooooopid with ten "o"s. And I love it, like I love pizza grease running down my arm, the twinge of unmistakable joy when a cube of Pabst is pulled from the supermarket cooler, and watching the opening credits to *Blazing Saddles*, knowing you're going to be laughing and rockin' at the same time for the next little bit of your life. Temporarily dissolve the gloom cloud of reality. Being this dumb and this catchy without being a joke? It's way harder than it sounds. Direct hit, Mean Jeans. —Todd (Dirtnap)

METHADONES, THE: *Self-titled*: 7" single

The great thing about The Methadones is their uncanny ability to make polished pop punk songs and somehow pull it off without ever sounding too sanitized. However, this two-track 7" serves up gobs and gobs of layered cheese. Their sound here really resembles the worst parts of modern MxPx. —N.L. Dewart (Underground Communiqué, undercomm.bigcartel.com)

MIDDLE CLASS: *Out of Vogue*: 7" EP

Author of *American Hardcore*, Steven Blush, I'm lookin' directly at you. You're wrong about one critical piece of history that your book is named after; and I'm just looking at the date on this label. Middle Class. "Torture Garden Music. 1978." Bad Brains—love 'em. Highly influential. I'm with you there. However, they were not responsible for the first hardcore punk record in America, as much as you'd like a band on your side of America to be the vinyl first-men-on-the-moon for an entire genre of music, it isn't so. Bad Brains' "Pay to Cum." Released: 1979. It's. On. The. Label. Middle Class are, unquestionably hardcore: lighting fast playing, barely attached melody. Awesome. The only other serious contender, if you're using a highly subjective slide rule of "influence" to overcome the date pressed directly on the record, like Middle Class just "doesn't count"? Black Flag's *Nervous Breakdown*. October, 1978. My math's shitty and I get my days of the week wrong all the time, but 1978 was before 1979. Check it. Re-release of the first-ever American hardcore record ever that was getting damn hard and expensive to find. —Todd (Frontier)

MORION: *Insomnia*: CD

The metal of, say, Shadow Falls with keyboards. Out of Poland. —Donofthedeath (Zero Substance)

MUCKRUCKERS, THE / OBSESSORS, THE: *Split*: 7"

This slab of creamy red wax could very well be the pick of the litter this month. The Muckruckers have got this dancy Fleshtones meets Beltones thing going on that I love. The Obsessors are contacting my spud boy tendencies by having a heavy Devo element to their tunes—perhaps if Devo was fronted by a girl and had Dee Dee Ramone co-writing with Mark Mothersbaugh. So good. I am going on an active search for more from both of these bands. —Ty Stranglehold (Braindart)

MUTOID MEN: *Mutoid World*: LP

It's all about the math. Shorebirds and Doomhawk—more or less—become Mutoid Men. Separate, they we're potent. Together, they crumble theories. Doomhawk did its best to defy genres, Shorebirds did a flawless job with theirs. When a project contains this much talent and creativity and the forces aren't battling each other, holy-fucking-shit. Usually synthesizers make me feel sick, but when the punk is this driving and catchy, they can get away with a lot. It's an epic ride of a record. Strap me in. —Daryl (Rumbletowne)

MY LIFE WITH THE THRILL KILL KULT: *Death Threat*: CD

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thrash and stomp we've come to expect from this infamous glam rock outfit. "Spotlight Hooker" and "Foxyxy Rockit" fulfill their signature B-movie disco slut raunch, while "Invasion (of the Ultra Modelz)" will be the next biggest slow grind striptease track. Recommended, especially for those that still have *Sexpllosion* or *Confessions of a Knife*. —Kristen K. (Rustblade, rustblade.com)

NEW BRUISES / OFF SHORE RADIO: Split: 7"

Not released off Bryon's Kiss Of Death, this New Bruises split is off Jan Yo-yo's German punk label. Bruises drops two steaming tracks of anti-establishment angst, continuing on the heels of Fugazi and Hot Water Music, while Offshore Radio lends its two tracks of bouncy garage rock. Plus the cool hand-drawn cartoony Bruises cover of severed limbs. What's not to like? —Kristen K. (Yo-Yo)

NIGHTY NIGHT: Belle: 7" EP

The first song sort of sounds like the Mo-Dettes singing sad lullabies written by Guided by Voices, the second song is an acoustic folk tune involving people who "wait for wars in threes and fours," which is kind of a neat line, whatever the hell it means, and the third song sounds like something for which i lack meaningful points of reference. After a few spins i became mildly smitten by this 45, thus—tragically—jettisoned all the snarky wisecracks i had devised

earlier. Alas. BEST SONG: "Belle" BEST SONG TITLE: Would you believe "Underwater?" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: "This record is dedicated to Zach's dog, Belle." Please hold for one moment whilst i try to dig my snarky wisecracks back up. —Rev. Nørð (Let's Pretend)

NOFX: Cokie the Clown: CDEP

So, the first NOFX release in the decade I've been following them that I did not actively seek out ends up in my review box? Irony. NOFX lost me when they released *Coaster*. It was their first album that didn't have that one song that got stuck in my head like the others. Hell, even their greatest hits album added "Wore out the Soles of My Party Boots" to the NOFX canon. Surprisingly, this EP is good. I will definitely keep this. NOFX has my attention for at least one more album. After that, all bets are off. —Bryan Static. (Fat)

O PIONEERS / NEW BRUISES:

Under the Influence Vol. 10: 7"

Well, that was certainly interesting. You guys know the deals with these, right? Two bands, one cover song each. The problem with the whole series was either that I didn't care about either band, or I didn't care about the songs they covered. This one is two bands I enjoy with two cover songs I have never heard. I checked out the originals before I started the disc and they are definitely... cover songs. I think O Pioneers cover fit

their style more than the New Bruises song (which was "Nu Bruises" by Superchunk, which kind of feels like cheating to me). Recommended if you're into this sort of things. —Bryan Static (Suburban Home)

OPEN CASKET / SCRABBLE ROBOT:

Split: 7"

The "Vs." between the bands' names on the cover positions this split not as a collaboration, but as a competition. Open Casket's first song features the sort of casually angry vocals that I find endearing. It's sort of an armchair angry, a "Damn it I wish I had more root beer!" angry, rather than an "I'm gonna gut you and eat your intestines" angry. It's the kind of angry you can get behind pretty easily when you're sitting around listening to records. OC's second song is sung by a different band member. It's about falling out with a former bandmate and offers these fantastic lyrics: "Spent the money from the last show. I know that was wrong. I bought a bong." Scrabble Robot's songs on the flip are perfectly acceptable, but about halfway through the first one I found myself really anxious to go back and listen to the Open Casket side again. So I guess I've picked a winner. It should be noted that this is a beautiful package, with an amazing full-color cover, green vinyl, and a comic strip insert which, by the way, also depicts Open Casket as the winner of the competition. —MP Johnson (Mortville)

OSCEOLA / SUIS LA LUNE: Split: 7"

If you missed these two bands on tour together, here is the next best thing. According to Osceola's myspace page, the vocalist has left and there isn't any further news as to the future of the screamo thrash band. Stay tuned. Sweden's Suis La Luna follows up with, "Friends," a hardcore garage track that manages to float into a gentle melody before soaring into a frothy wave of guitar effects. Good stuff in the same vein as The Sound Of Animals Fighting and Phoenix And The Turtle. —Kristen K. (Protagonist Music)

OVERNIGHT LOWS, THE:

City of Rotten Eyes: CD

Occasionally, a band will blow an unpretentious slab of three chord rock'n'roll right through the wall. The Overnight Lows are from Jackson, Mississippi, a city that is historically remiss in providing the world with blazing punk rock. But the blues defiantly had a baby this time. The Overnight Lows play rippers with a garage sensibility. The title track, "City of Rotten Eyes," is a mover. "Eyesore" and "So Well Read" slow to a pogo. The vocals display the proper attitude and are backed up appropriately. It never slows down. All the elements are in play. —Billups Allen (Goner)

PROFESSION: ILL: *Discography: CD*

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you?" He then handed me a paper bag with a couple of CDs and a cassette. "I have a label. Here's some stuff I've put out." With that, he was gone. I have no information about Profession: Ill other than I'm pretty sure they hail from the eastern part of Canada. They play stripped-down old school hardcore punk that had me thinking of Black Flag or The WeirDOS without sounding like a carbon copy. Kind of like The Regulations. My favorite song title here is "Rum, Sodomy, and the Thrash" but a close second would be "Repetition Killed the Cat," mainly because almost every song on the disc is on here twice. Good stuff. I'd like to hear more from. —Ty Stranglehold (Shred City)

PSYCHED TO DIE: *Scatter Brained: 7"*

There is a long list of phobias that people have. Flying, heights, and spiders seem to be popular among a lot of people. While these fears aren't totally irrational, they are statistically unlikely to cause most people harm. Myself, I'm scared of snakes, horribly so; however, I've seen one snake that was neither in a cage nor accompanied by another human being in my life. I was later told that snake was dead and headless—I still would've run if I had known it at the time. As anecdotal as my case may be, I think that it illustrates something particularly familiar: We oftentimes put a lot of energy and time into fearing relatively improbable situations, which would result in death if they occurred. Psyched To Die seem to have a fear, one that is more

likely to occur with many people than being in a plane crash or being bit by a spider—even more likely than being in a fender bender—and it doesn't result in physical death. Their fear seems to be mundanity, becoming milquetoast dogsbodies who are forever haunted by their lacking and debilitated by their inability to ever find happiness. It makes sense. I mean, what's more attention-worthy: fear of having a rare cause of death or fear of being part of the mass of people leading lives of quiet desperation? As for the music, this 7" hits a little harder than the previous one, more doom and gloom. Each one of the four tracks is a simultaneously catchy and stressful hardcore punk tune. It's quite possible that this one will wipe any trace of a smile off your face, but you'll love it for doing so. —Vincent (Dirtnap)

PSYCHED TO DIE: *Year One: CD*

Why in the hell hasn't this been done before? It seems so simple: Let's start a band that sounds like the Zero Boys, Angry Samoans, and the hardcore side of the Descendents. Talk about a no-miss idea! Well, Psyched To Die have done just that and the results are glorious. This collection of songs contains everything I love about hardcore punk: High energy playing, snotty vocals, and huge hooks. Why is this so hard to pull off, why are there so few bands that get it right? This band stands up to any band that you wanna name; they are that good. Every time I listen to "Permanent Solution" I have

to check the credits to make sure it is not a long-lost cover. That song is an instant punk rock classic. All the rest of the tunes are great, including an *actual* long-lost cover of "Bummer Bitch" to complete the record. Pick up this collection or grab the singles while we hope for a full length. There could not be a higher recommendation for a new band than Psyched To Die. —Mike Frame (Dirtnap)

PUSSY-COW: *Drinky Birds: CD*

There are some things that you just accept about Los Angeles. The liquor aisle at Food4Less closes before the rest of the store. All DMV employees are safely behind bulletproof glass for good reason. L.A. would be absolutely beautiful... if you could just see it through the smog. Folks with much better shoes and cell phones will ask you for money... and ask you to hold. Then there's the food, especially in the neighborhood Pu\$\$y-cow and Razorcake share: Highland Park has some of the best, most street-available, reasonably priced Mexican (all districts) food anywhere outside of Mexico. It often gives Northern culinary visitors—whose previous exposure to Mexican food has been from cans or Taco Bell—a big, ol' stomach ache. They're just not used to the spices, the lard, the cheeses. Pu\$\$y Cow: there's nothing rotten or off about 'em; they definitely won't give you "music poisoning," but there's something distinctly L.A.-native about their approach to music.

Your ears will have to eat through their Dickies meets Dwarves meets Stevo-then-cow-punk-era Vandals, meets crazy dude with nice shoes asking for change, meets eccentric, spazzy musicality. And, to me, I like 'em. It's a taste I've acquired while living in the neighborhood, but I understand that they're not for everyone. (Their name is from a popular mis-hearing of a car dealer who advertises on TV all the time in the Southland. "Go see Cal, go see Cal." Sounds a lot like "Pussycow, Pussycow.") —Todd (Chorizo Bonito)

RATIONAL ANTHEM / THE STRAIT A'S: *Split: 7"*

Rational Anthem is pop punk, but I liked it immediately. It's always weird with me and my relationship to pop punk because I almost always hate it. When I do like it, I can never figure out what it is that makes it stand out from the rest of the genre. The lyrics are definitely raising the bar (songs about disillusion and moving on). But they are still pretty basic. Though whatever it is that I like about this, it's making me play it a lot. I like the other side, too. It's pop but it has a more Ramones style than what usually comes to mind when something is called pop punk. It has dual male/female vocals and the lyrics are pretty idiotic, broken-heart stuff except for the song "Pop Punk Boys Are Girls" which disses the named party for liking songs about love and compares them to girls. It would be petty, if not hypocritical and sexist, if not sung by

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a girl. In this context, it's just kind of funny. —Craven Rock (Traffic Street)

RAYDIOS, THE: *Now: LP*

Japanese punk that's the midpoint between some of these dudes' previous bands: Teengenerate and Firestarter. Here's the story I remember, to the best of my recollection. I'm telling you this because every record mentioned is worth your time to track down and listen to. Years ago, Teengenerate wanted to be a power pop band. They had a rough-and-tumble demo and sent it to Crypt Records. Tim Warren, the label honcho, flipped at the raw aggression—of a band tapping into the wellspring of the asphalt and drag strip heart of rock'n'roll. He convinced the band to not touch the demo, and in 1994 *Get Action!* was released. Garage and proto-punks clenched their fists in glee. The next two years would see two more excellent records: *Smash Hits!!* and *Savage!* Teengenerate disbanded. In 1996, many (if not all) of the members—Fifi, Fink, Sammy—reformed and became Firestarter. This time, they recorded and released the album they had conceptually thought Teengenerate would have been: power pop perfection. It's got this unadulterated power chained to bouncy melodies, like FM Knives and Gentleman Jesse. Don't let the Bible-lookin' cover of *Livin' on the Heat* deter you from purchase. (As far as I know, it's still unreleased in the States.) In 2005, Fink left Firestarter and started Raydios and it's the mid-point between

a contemporary Japanese version of Eddie Cochran and the Knack through the valves of Estrus and Sympathy Records: driving hooks, plenty of meat and screech, and impeccable, unsterilized musicianship. Cool stuff. —Todd (Dirtnap)

RAYMILLAND: *Recordings '79-'81: CD*

The only thing I know about Ray Milland, the actor, was that he was in that horror movie *Frogs*, from which I ripped off the poster art to use on the cover of my fanzine like a quarter-century ago. The only thing I know about Raymilland, the band, is that 1) they are "legendary 1st wave post punk from St. Louis," and 2) they have a really stupid name ((and THAT I learned from a sticker on the front cover)). Having cut my teeth in the punk scene during the largely undocumented very late 70's/early-to-mid 80's era, I fully understand the compulsion for aging fans of that period to scrape together whatever material exists by whatever undeservedly unknown band they used to get out of their minds to thirty years ago and belatedly plunking said scrapings onto a CD; the problem is, usually, that said CD indeed delights the family and friends of the band, but serves as little more than a vaguely interesting historical footnote for the rest of us. Surprisingly, the life and times of Raymilland—dour-countenanced dorks, several of whom have their hair combed into their eyes ((though possibly so long ago that that was actually cool)) ((er...probably not))—actually constitute a fairly cool listenin' experience. Who

knew? Mildly darkish, postish, punkish, synthish, rockish post-wave somethin-somethin' that probably doesn't really sound like Ultravox v. Mission of Burma in a burping contest, but that's fun to say, so why not? I never really listened to bands like this back in The Day ((Wire, Television, Ultravox, Gang of Four...I mean, I didn't even listen to the Wipers back then, ya know?)), but they manage to not offend me with comball über-darkness, nor do they descend into kitschy "*the 80's are here! Let's look all glassy eyed and fellate test-tubes!*" Peevee-Herman-O-Rama, so even though I'm a little too much of a straight-up goof to tell you exactly WHEN their time was, I can say with great certainty that they were ahead of it. Pretty cool if you like this sort of thing, and still kinda cool even if you don't. BEST SONG: Well, I thought it was "She's Got Medals," 'til I found out it was a David Bowie cover. Beats me, I never really listened to him either until I was too old and weak to fight it. "High & Wide" is pretty cool though. BEST SONG TITLE: I hate to say this, but I think it's also "She's Got Medals." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I think it was the me stealing the cover art from *Frogs* thing. —Rev. Nørb (BDR)

REACTIONARIES, THE: *Ingenuity: LP*

You would never know there were two ex-members of the Belgium hardcore outfit Dead Stop in this band. Two very different bands. But both great. The Reactionaries are somewhere between Detroit proto punk and garage rock.

Before the first side of this record was over, I was pretty much convinced this was a great record. Songs like the opener, "Good News," is a great introduction to the band. The fuzzed-out guitar is great, and the psychedelic influences come screaming in. The title track and "Walking Away" are the two most aggressive of the bunch, but they don't forsake any melody for crunch. You can have both, and they give it to you, both barrels. But then there's a second side to listen to before making it official. It's a tad different than the first. The songs are little slower and longer, but damn, it's all good! It begins appropriately enough with "Other Side," and the verdict is pretty much in. "Fool for You" sounds like a lost Misfits track. The vocals sound exactly like Danzig in this song. It's eerie! The closer is "System of Interest" and they really open up on this. Maybe the longest song of the album, but there's more texture, great backup vocals, and further proof that this band is very capable of being massive. I want to hear more. Gord should write these dudes a blank check and give them the world. —M.Avrq (Deranged)

REACTORS, THE: *Self-titled: 7" EP*

The Reactors were a female-fronted punk band from San Bernardino. Active from 1978-82, they managed to self-release one EP and one LP before they threw in the towel. Don't happen to have copies of either release, but by the looks of this, this is a repress of the 7" EP, which had an original run

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of three hundred copies when it was first released, and included five tunes of straight-ahead, scrappy punk rock. Although he doesn't appear on this, the band is also notable for having included Tony Fate (The Sins, Grey Spikes, BellRays) in a later lineup. Word is Artifix has acquired the band's recordings, so look for either more releases or a more comprehensive collection of their tunes in the near future. —Jimmy Alvarado (Artifix)

REPPRESSED, THE: World in Flames: CD-R

The Repressed were one of the bands that formed the nucleus of the legendary "Lower Eastside Drunk Punk" scene that built up around New York's ABC No Rio in the late-'80s. Many crazy tales about about that scene, not to mention about this band, and I would venture a good percentage of 'em are probably true. What you have here is a reissue of a demo recorded by the band in 1991, I believe. Though the sound quality can get a bit dicey in spots, which isn't surprising when you consider we're talking about tapes that are nineteen years old at this point and were probably not recorded in the most optimal of settings in the first place (then again, you're a total dope if you're listening to punk rock for superior fidelity and high end recording practices), the tunes are often fast'n'tight and well executed, are definitely a mark above the insta-thrash and bonehead metal that was New York's primary export

during that period, and infused with the perfect amount of raunch to give this a gloriously skuzzy sheen. This comes highly recommended as an antidote to those whining grampa-punkers who insist that quality punk never made it past 1983. Paul will probably send me a note setting me right if I'm wrong, but I believe they may still be quasi-active, so I'd highly recommend you catch 'em if they show up on a bill. Be sure to wear a helmet and ample padding, though, 'cause you're gonna need 'em. —Jimmy Alvarado (The Repressed)

RHINO 39 / BLACK RANDY: Split: 7"

A bit of a coup here for the Artifix kids. What you get here are two outtakes from legendary L.A. punk label Dangerhouse, both of which are heretofore unreleased. On one side you get Black Randy And The Metrosquad cranking out an alternate take of "I Wanna be a Nark," recorded during the session that resulted in the *Idi Amin* single. On the other, you get Rhino39 dishing out "Night in Watts," a nice bit of mid-tempo proto-core reminiscent of the Simpletones that they left off their *Prolixin Stomp* EP because they thought "it sucked." The tune was believed lost along with the original tapes for said EP, but Dangerhouse's David Brown rediscovered a "quick mix" on a cassette tape and turned it over to Artifix. It is the only tune they recorded not on the Rhino 39 discography CD released a couple of years ago. As per usual, the release

looks and sounds great, and a one-sheet is included with info about each band and the tune. —Jimmy Alvarado (Artifix)

ROTTING OUT: This Is Just a Life: EP

Straight-ahead, no frills hardcore punk with a late '80s youth crew influence. Along the lines of bands like Bold, Mouthpiece, and Bane. The songs are mainly mid-tempo and they have some good breakdowns that are useful in switching to and from the thrashier parts. "Kobe Bryant Lifestyle" is the standout track, for sure, with "Two Worlds" a close second. My only complaint about this record is the two cover songs at the end ("LA Girl" and "I Love Living in the City"). I know this is the sort of thing that pleases a crowd, but fuck playing for a crowd. Make them come up to your level! The vocalist is pretty good; a gravelly, and yet, clear delivery, and the musicianship is super solid. Quite good all around. Nice to hear a band from L.A. that isn't another drunk punk or clone crust band. For sure, one of the best true hardcore bands in the area. —M.Avrgr (World Won't Listen)

ROUGH KIDS: Self-titled: 7"

These are some really fast-paced post punk songs in the vein of Gang Of Four and Wire. A lot of tension and energy comes through in tight and catchy bursts. A nice little lyric sheet would have been cool, but, then again, it's just the music that matters here and these guys really bang 'em out. Great

self-released stuff. Get a copy. —Rene Navarro (Rough)

SAW WHEEL: "Raw Words" b/w "The Old Days": 7"

Earnest, glowing-ember music that's a mix between Rumbleseat (think the more acoustic side of Hot Water Music) and John "Cougar" Mellencamp. It's intimate, well played, direct, and could be in a folk punk lineup or a bill with more country influences, like Ninja Gun or Drag The River. There's some nice, quiet security here, and it sounds like Saw Wheel comes from a small town, even if they aren't. Well realized. —Todd (Anti-Creative)

SECRET CUTTER: Self-titled: EP


This sounds like what would happen if Brutal Truth and Hewhocorrupts happened to swap members after being double booked at the same venue and having shared a brick of hash. It's good stuff, yes. —Juan Espinosa (Square Of Opposition, Discontent)

SEVERANCE PACKAGE:

All Down Hill: 7"

Raging and engaging garage rock by a trio from Chico, California on their three-song 7". Primarily, Severance Package is mining '60s style *Nuggets* rock along with primal '70s punk. Current bands you could compare them to would include Dead Moon, The Candy Snatchers, and Shark Pants. All three songs, with their mastery of melody and sheer velocity, grab you from the outset and don't let go. This is

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a band to keep your eye on. —Jake Shut (Shut Up, shutuprecords.com)

**SHANNON AND THE CLAMS:
I Wanna Go Home: CD**

Bastardized '50s riffs seems to be flavor of the month, but Shannon And The Clams are having a lot of fun with it and are able to bring the listener along. The guitars are laden with reverb, as are the vocals some of the time. This dynamic creates a bit of necessary chaos for a band that likely sounds really good live. "Troublemaker" and "The Warlock in the Woods" are mid-tempo '50s rock while "Blast Me to Bermuda" gets into faster realms. There are slower songs that are well done, but become a bit tedious after two minutes. That two minute pop standard must occasionally be adhered to. The songs, as they appear on the album, are occasionally grouped too closely by tempo, which is a shame, because the diversity in speed would have been an opportunity to create a better flow for the album. But all in all, the songwriting is solid. It's a great record for fans of the new old. —Billups Allen (1-2-3-4-Go!)

**SIN REMEDIO:
Border Hoppin' Hardcore: CD**

I am so excited for this release. It's a long time coming. I am going to make the claim that they are one of the premier bands in Los Angeles. I have talked to touring bands that they have shared the stage with and the

conversation was always that they were pretty amazed. With only a split 7" with Life In Exile under their belt, this band has been making the rounds live for quite a few years now. I like bands that mix things up and work outside the box. This band of two females and two males really caught my attention right from the start. A mix of Latin and punk thrash with grind and death metal overtones is hard to not take notice of. They know how to take it from soft and pretty to brutal and charging. I hope this is one release that does not get overlooked. —Donofthedeat (Sin Remedio, sinremedio.net)

**SMALLTOWN:
Read between the Lines: 10"**

This may sound weird: It's sometimes better to forget what got you into a band in the first place, especially when raging fire and uncontained electricity are replaced with a hand-warming smolder and reliable indoor lighting. Critically, it's unfair for me to return to the head-and-rock space of their first couple of 7"s and lament that that boat's sailed. Smalltown's more introspective and musically slower now, with frequent incorporations of reggae, but all in a style that's immediately recognizable as them. I can't say that this 10" lit my head on fire like a match, but like really hot water, I'm slowly adjusting, inch by body inch, dipping into Smalltown's new musical pool. Side A is four originals. Side B has covers of The Strike, The Statues, and

Elvis Costello. The packaging on this 10" is gorgeous: die-cut "rising sun" cover and delicious-looking red vinyl. Sneaker hit or just a sleeper? Only time and more spins—which I'm more than willing to give them—will tell. —Todd (Pirate's Press)

SNARLAS: Self-titled: 7"

Mid-tempo, thudding punk with constant female gang vocals. Pop sensibilities with frayed edges and borrowed equipment. It's scrappy DIY punk with a fiery, burning passion that transcends musicianship. Awkward sounding at times, but it just adds to the punkness. Imagine The Shaggs meets Cleveland Bound Death Sentence songs that Emily sung. —Daryl (Plan-It-X South)

**SNOWING:
Fuck Your Emotional Bullshit: 7"**

Fast, jangling guitars. Hoarse, off-key wailing. Happy-go-lucky spazzing. Silkscreened cover sticking to the plastic sleeve. Think emo back when the first touches of indie rock were getting thrown in. Cap'n Jazz. Braid. Nuzzle. If you told me this was from 1994, I'd believe you. No, they haven't done anything to improve on the formula, but they keep it catchy and fun and stop just shy of cutesy. —CT Terry (Square Of Opposition)

SNUGGLE: Zero Real Hearts: LP

I picked this one up knowing that I liked everything that I had heard from 'em (their Tag... 7" and the

Bent Outta Shape split). When I first put it on, I thought it was pretty good. Then I listened to it more, and then some more. And then I came to realize what a gem I had in my possession. Snuggle is undeniably pop punk, but it ain't humdrum like a lot of the genre has become again. This LP is unwashed, intense, and uninhibited. They sound like their heads are barely above water and it is categorically imperative that hear what they have to say, even if that means that they sink while they're trying to tell you what's up. It sounds like four dudes converging with a common need, not one guy using the rest of the band as mere means for advancing his own private agenda. The drums, bass, and guitars are all over the place, going in their directions yet moving perfectly together (often quicker than a mile per minute). The vocals, like the strings and skins, are raw and urgent—they refrain from coming even close to any type of commonplace pop punk vocals. The lyrics are almost only coincidentally sung. It's like the dude yells in such a way that it just fits because of the exigency in what he's trying to convey. The whole thing has a very full and emotion-laden sound that has a pureness that seems to come from letting go, playing loud, playing fast, and playing what you need to play. Get it. —Vincent (1-2-3-4 Go!)



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SOCIAL TASK:

1979 Studio Recordings: 7" EP

As has been noted in numerous books, periodicals, and other sources, the influx of kids from the suburbs and beaches of Southern California into the punk scene created a bit of a conundrum. On the one hand, most of the new kids were considerably more aggressive and, in some cases, downright sociopathic compared to the more laidback, arty attitude of Hollywood's punks. Thing is, along with all the aggro, the music these kids were dishing up in their hands gave the scene a much-needed shot of creativity and intensity, and soon the old guard was being overrun by bands like Black Flag, the Slashers, China White, The Blades, Non-Fascists, The Outsiders, the Screwz and others who laid the foundation, good or ill, for hardcore, modern pop punk, and the now stereotypical Southern California punk sound. Social Task was one of these early bands, comprised of former members of the Slashers, The Idols, Non-Fascists, and China White. The five tunes on the first side of this EP, recorded in 1979 and summarily forgotten about until a few years ago, deftly showcase all the hoopla surrounding those early beach bands. While spare on technical finesse and more straightforward than Hollywood's artier punk bands, the tunes are chock full of interesting chord progressions and ramped up with the same level of intensity that made bands like the Bags and the Germs such a hoot.

Side B here presents four more tunes from 2007 with most of the lineup remaining intact, and it appears that age has not mellowed them one whit. Last I checked, they're still out and about, playing gigs all over Southern California, so definitely make a point to check 'em out and, by all means, pick this up before you later end up kicking yourself repeatedly in the ass while paying outrageous amounts for it on Ebay. —Jimmy Alvarado (Artifix)

SUNDOWNERS: *Gnome and Glacier*: LP

[Looking at the cover, and then pondering.] I've never given much thought to the type of music that a bunch of garden gnomes would make if they had the opportunity. Would it be Smurfy? Small and bearded music? I bet there'd be some polka. They're probably shit-tired of Christmas music, looking at rosemary bushes, and being crawled over by snails. I put the Sundowners in the same sect as North Trolls, Audacity, and Thee Makeout Party. The larger chunks of their music making can be traced to top-tier DIY punk like Shark Pants, The Bananas, and Shang-A-Lang, but they're smart enough to not put tracing paper on light tables of their mentors' songs. I suspect it's a mixture of youth, drugs, infrequent bathing, and enjoying the moment that gives 'em their own signatures and style. Good stuff, akin in the chose-your-own-adventure spirit of the Abi Yoyos. Warms up on repeat listens. —Todd (Dirt Cult)

SUSPECT PARTS:

Change Your Mind: 7"

This is another throwback '60s rock 7". There are two songs on this release and "Change Your Mind" makes for a fun/love pop tune. Suspect Parts really did go for that early '60s aesthetic by making this a two-track clear blue vinyl 45 with cover art to fit the theme. This record has a black and white clip art photo of a woman sunbathing that looks like she came out of the before-mentioned era. The second song, a cover of "Then He Kissed Me," is funny—as James Sullivan sings it as a man—with lyrics intact. If you live for '60s beat, then this would fit nicely along with your other 7" records. —N.L. Dewart (House Party)

SUSPECT PARTS:

"Maneater" b/w "She Cracked": 45

Given the ever-widening chasm between the records I get sent to review for *Razorcake* and the records for which I'd actually pay money, the Suspect Parts—having a foot in both graves—were a welcome surprise. Furthering this modest bouquet of presumably welcome surprises, the A-side is NOT the Hall & Oates cover of the same name—but is, instead, a punkish, Mersey-tweaked pop-rocker about a girl who "picked up some nasty habits," somewhat emboldened by the fact that it's sung by a guy who can't hit the high notes without yelling. The chorus includes the partial phrase "She's a Man..." so frequently that it's difficult for me to figure out if this

is some kinda transvestitory "Lola" excursion, or just some honest ((and ill-planned)) attempt at a hook. The b-side is, in fact, the cover you think it is, and a capably executed version at that. I can't say I've been rocked to my marrow by this record, but I can suggest that my marrow's probably done worse things in its day ((I bear the burden of noteworthily headstrong marrow)). I believe Immanuel Kant would call this record "pleasant," which bears mixed implications for those of us questing the Beautiful. BEST SONG: "Maneater" BEST SONG TITLE: "She Cracked," of course. Jonathan Richman vs. Hall & Oates is a three-hit fight! ((his fist hitting their faces, them hitting the ground, and the ambulance hitting ninety)). FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The circular smiley face on the front cover's ice cream cone image is almost exactly the same circumference as the center circle of the inner 45 sleeve's hole. —Rev. Norb (Hover Craft)

TEENAGE COOL KIDS:

Foreign Lands: LP

Comparisons have been made to bands like Pavement, Built To Spill, and the Pixies. All pretty good reference points. Pick any one you want and go with it. Or pick all three. It's only scratching the iceberg, and an easy introduction, if you're a stranger to these folks. Teenage Cool Kids are f'n awesome! Tuneful and catchy beyond belief. Syrupy guitar dominates the sound and a lot of "who-ooh" backup vocals remind me

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of the Beach Boys. These guys know how to craft well-written songs, and could very well be the new masters in our midst. Denton, TX seems to have a corner on bands these days. I posit that Teenage Cool Kids lead the pack. One of those records that you don't think can get any better than it already is, and sure enough, it does get better, and get better and on and on. Once they hit the title track, and then on to following songs like "Crossing the Desert as a Stream" and "Speaking in Tongues," it's pure bliss, removing the listener from their surroundings and putting them right in the middle of the music. This is perfection. I strongly urge you to get this album. I'm telling everyone I know about how awesome this is. Some are sick of hearing about it, but it's so great it's unreal! I do know this record and I are going to be spending a lot of quality time together. —M.Avrq (Protagonist Music, protagonistmusic.com)

TEN O SEVENS, THE: *Search Party: 7"*

While The Ten O Sevens lists a whole pile of influences on their website, it's pretty safe to say that the one right at the top, The Clash, holds a special place in these London fellows' hearts. The three songs on this 7" would've fit beautifully on The Clash's first record. Actually, they'd have been right at home on The 101ers' *Elgin Avenue Breakdown*. And although the resemblance is uncanny (particularly the vocal delivery), I've got no qualms. These are great songs and the band certainly nails the sound that they're shooting for right on the

head. Good stuff. —Dave Williams (No Front Teeth)

THIS BIKE IS A PIPE BOMB: *Convertible: LP*

This band gets grouped in with the whole folk punk rival, and on a certain level that makes sense. But on the other hand, they're so much better than any other "folk punk" band that I've ever heard, that I'm tempted to take them out of that category altogether. Can we call them, simply, a punk band? I dare say we can! This LP is basically what you'd expect, and I don't mean that in a bad way. Catchy songs about politics, racial relations, and more, with both boy and girl vocals (always a plus, as far as I'm concerned), plus a cover of Joe Hill's "The Preacher and the Slave." Unlike every other This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb record, this one didn't amaze me right away, but it's still really, really, really (three "reallys?" yes!) good, and I can ninety-two percent guarantee that I'll like it more over time. If this were a cereal, it'd be Honey Nut Cheerios: sugary sing-a-long choruses with a non-sugary message (Cheerios). Also, if you haven't seen this band live, you're missing out! —Maddy (No Idea)

TODD CONGELLIERE / JACOB HAMILTON: *Split: Cassette*

Gotta say, I'm enjoying the shit out of this current mild resurgence in cassette culture, whether or not it's laced in irony. Jacob Hamilton's (Tubers) got some really nice songs on here; the best ones seem to be built out of a kind of

honest openness, as if the guy's voice is about to crack from emotion (or the high notes), even though it doesn't ever quite get there. The vocals are juxtaposed with some nice and catchy folk stuff. Whether it's acoustic or electric, it works nearly all of the time. Comes across very similarly to an old Kind Of Like Spitting odds and ends collection tape I've got laying around. Nice work. Todd Congelliere (Recess Records, Underground Railroad, etc.) takes up the other side with his own batch of weirdly off-kilter yet catchy pop songs. Again, solid work; Congelliere's stuff manages to be both bouncy and somber as fuck, and he does it in a way that I just can't figure out. Weird songs that are surprisingly evocative. Anyway, point is this is a full-length cassette of two solo arteests who can't sing for shit and yet sound resoundingly rad. Refreshing. —Keith Rosson (People's Republic of Rock And Roll)

TORTURED TONGUES: *Arizona Murder: 7"*

This is one of those records that comes out of nowhere and is so damn good that it makes one wonder where the hype machine is these days. This is the sort of punk that makes punk awesome. Fuzzed-out guitars, hyper-paced, infectious rhythms, a vocalist who sounds either belligerent or unhinged. At times he reminds me of Bobby Sox from the Teenage Queers. "Arizona Murder" shambles in semi fast and loose with a lot of people talking over each other, a tempo that rushes them


all out the door, then suddenly it's over. On the B side we get "Extension Cord," with an ending verse of "I kick the chair, you gasp for air" repeated until one literal final "goodbye." Only 300 of these roam the earth, so do what you must. —M.Avrq (Lethal Triad, myspace.com/torturedtongues)

TUMOUR OF SOUL: *Tumour Necrosis Factor: CD*


Burp metal. —Jimmy Alvarado (Zero Substance)

TV GHOST: *Cold Fish: CD*

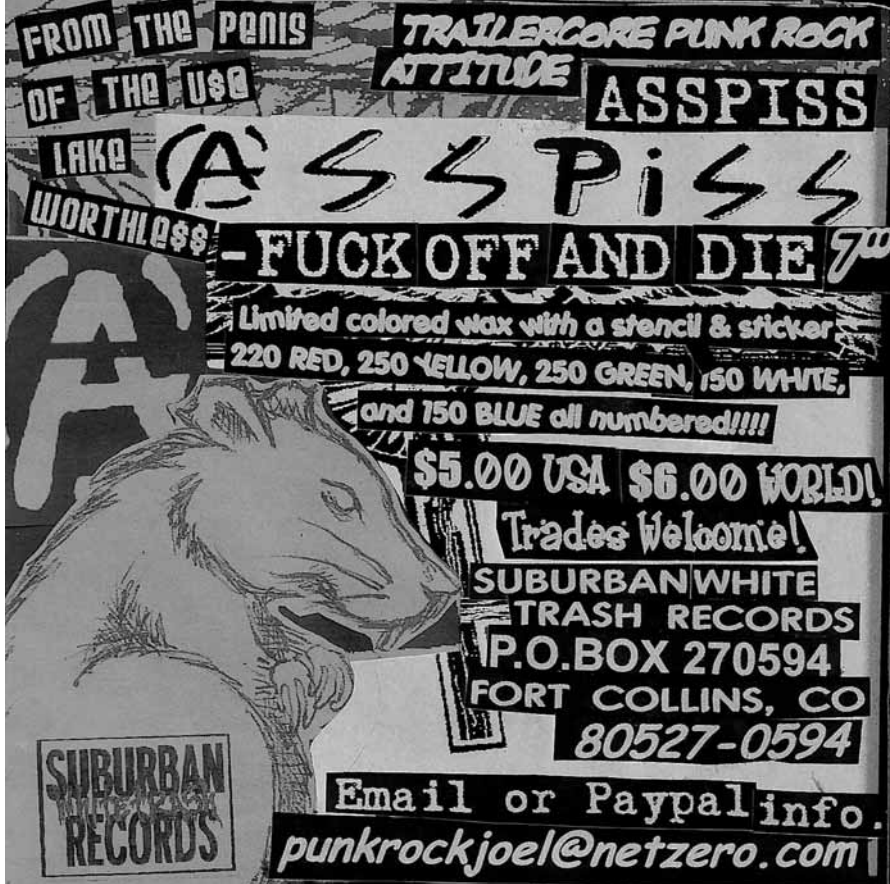
Sounds like music that washing machines play in the background to intensify the mood of scariness when they're telling washing machine ghost stories around the campfire. Also sounds like the music that would be playing over the still-functioning car radio when ghouls and demons come out to cavort and steal the souls of the young couple who died in the song "Teen Love" by No Trend. Surely that's a ringing recommendation. BEST SONG: "The Consumption" BEST SONG TITLE: That's a tossup between "The Consumption" and "The Singularity," although "The Drunkard" and "The Recluse" kind of tug at my heart strings, too. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: If you can tell that this album is called "Cold Fish" without first having to pop it into your computer and have iTunes tell you the title, you're a better man than i. "Man" generically, of course. —Rev. Nørð (In The Red)



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U.X. VILEHEADS: *First: EP*

Sounds like this was done by a bunch of fourteen-year-old kids living in the middle of nowhere circa 1982. However, U.X. Vileheads consists of ex-members of the Vicious, DS-13, and Regulations. Seems this crew has it wired when it comes to nailing the sound and feel of early hardcore. What's the secret? Do you guys only listen to the old stuff and nothing else? A pact with Satan? Seriously, many out there try to capture the sound and fall short. These fuckers never fail to deliver, no matter what band they're in. It's pure hardcore that's equally tuneful and thrashy. Imagine if the Offenders had relocated from Texas to DC in the early '80s. It would sound something like this. "Shut Down" reminds me of "I Hate Myself" in tone and delivery. In fact, lyrically, these guys are definitely not all smiles and looking to the brighter side of life. Instead, it's all a world of self-destruction and embracing the inevitable ugly ending. Being their debut, you get four quick blasts of nihilism in the form of three chords, crashing percussion, and a slightly belligerent vocalist. Throw yourself into the gaping maw of hell and get this on the way down. —M.Avr (Deranged)

UNBORN-SF: *Charge on Northern Boys!!!: CD*

Finnish punk legends Unborn-SF continue forging on with this melodic oi album. The vocals are almost identical to the RAC band Landser, but Unborn-

SF is far from shady. Upbeat, happy, bouncy melodies are countered with a raw, thick voice. It's remarkable that a band like this one can exist for over thirty years yet still remain relatively unknown outside of Europe, but those into street sounds have been keen on these chaps for years. Gargle with something with stinging power before trying to sing along, shave your head, and find some damn boots. Or just sit back and enjoy the spectacle of old men remaining true to form. Brilliant. —Art Ettinger (Alternative Action)

USED KIDS: *Yeah No: LP*

The Used Kids themselves call what they do "kind of an extension of the Modern Machines." As a listener, that's a fair description; as toward the tail end of that band their releases started to mild out a bit. On *Yeah No*, Nato found his knack for taking the raw, visceral, and confessional songwriting of Modern Machines' heyday album, *Thwap!*, and plugging it into a slightly slower tempo'd old school rock song format. It's definitely a lo-fi endeavor compared to some of Used Kids members' former band releases—Modern Machines and The Ergs!—but what this album lacks in production, it more than makes up for in great tunes. My favorite song, "Midwest Midsummer," is a great example of what the Used Kids do so well throughout this record. Musically, it's a dynamic song buoyed with blues riffs and a hard-hitting rock beat. Lyrically, it's got some great imagery

such as: "icy November" and "riding bikes under thundering rain." This is one well-done, good old-fashion rock'n'roll record reminiscent of The Jam. —N.L. Dewart (Salinas)

VACANT STATE: *Internal Conflict: 7"*


I'm assuming that this band hails from Vancouver, BC, based on what I could find on their lyric sheet. But what popped into my mind was that they love early '80s East Coast hardcore, especially Negative Approach. There are four charging punk numbers on the A side that shows that they really pay homage to their forefathers. The B side is one long-winded number that clocks in a hair over five minutes that reminded me something of the likes of the Germs' "Forming" or some later period Black Flag. Based on the A side, I hope to hear more to come. —Donofthedeath (Deranged)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

At Both Ends: 2 x 7"


Holy shitballs. Okay, there are four bands on the 2 x 7", which accompanies the final issue of the slick hardcore zine *At Both Ends*. However, this review is going to lean very heavily on one of these four bands. It's unavoidable. Let's start with the other three first. Unrestrained are a good, newer band who play '90s style heavy hardcore, and I'm sure they're pretty pumped to be on a comp with these three other bands. Grade has new songs on this record, which is weird, and not surprisingly, they're not very

good. Bane is one of my favorite bands in the history of bandkind, and these songs are awesome. One is even a re-recording of "Struck Down by Me" from their masterpiece *It All Comes Down to This*. Wicked. Okay, okay... Between Earth And Sky... Do you know how long I've been waiting for this? DO YOU?! This is Greg Bennick from Trial's new band. And as I've mentioned in many of my reviews in the past, Trial are the finest hardcore band that has ever existed. *Are These Our Lives?* is, in every way, perfection. So when I found out that Greg Bennick had a new band with Alexei from Trial/Catharsis on drums, I was crazy-stoked... but that was like, a decade ago. Since then, my "Trial fever" has only worsened and become incurable, and while I would regularly check in on what Greg Bennick and Between Earth And Sky were up to, I'd begun to lose hope of this band ever truly materializing. And then this record arrived at my door. After squealing like I'd just unwrapped a Cabbage Patch Kid on Xmas morning, 1983, I ushered my confused wife out of the way and excitedly fired up the record player. And the world made sense again. Bennick's voice, both soothing and infuriating (in a good way) obviously garners Trial comparisons, and, musically, these two songs aren't too far from *ATOL?*, but the presence of more intricate guitar melodies and other such subtleties add a uniqueness that I'm absolutely thrilled about. The lyrics are total Bennick fare, so brilliant, desperate,



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pleading, and hopeful. I can't believe I have this in my possession. Please put an LP out soon. Fucking incredible. —Dave Williams (At Both Ends, atbothendsmagazine.blogspot.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Dead Broke Rekerds: Sampler '09 vers. 2: CD

This is a compilation from Dead Broke Rekerds out of New York. The CD came in a clear sleeve with a paper insert. The cover of the insert has a fuzzy picture of the Banana Splits on it (*The Banana Splits Adventure Hour* was a TV show with both live action and animated segments that ran from 1968 to 1970. The Banana Splits were a band—Barry White was one of the studio musicians!—and they actually released an album in 1968.), which would be nicer if it were in color (although I do understand the difference in cost between color and black and white copies!). The back of the insert has the list of bands and songs typed out and a weird picture of a frog with a hand coming out of its mouth, apparently cut out and glued or taped to the paper and then copied. Evidently a low budget, DIY production, which I can appreciate. More importantly, there are twenty-three songs on the sampler for people to check out. The recording levels are a bit inconsistent. Unfortunately, there were not many songs that I got very enthusiastic about. Standouts for me included Bad Blood Revival (heavy, slowish stuff that was probably one of the more “weird” songs on the comp),

The Closet Fairies (energetic and very short, with a kind of whiney, annoying voice that I like), Iron Chic (two songs by them on this comp—one that had an intro that reminded me of the Marked Men—rocky and punky; the singer has a voice that reminds me of the guy from Hagfish), Dragonzord (a more sparse song; it almost sounds like it could be just one guy with a nice voice playing guitar and singing on a street corner), and Shang-A-Lang (a noisy, delightful mess that didn't necessarily sound like but yet reminded me of the energy of the Bananas or this Bike Is A Pipe Bomb). I think that most of the rest of the stuff on the comp is just not the type of music that really gets me going. Many of the bands are clearly very competent, some probably have fun and enthusiastic live shows, and there are definitely a few that I know have a good following and diehard fans (Onion Flavored Rings being one), but to me there didn't seem to be much that seemed very fresh or atypical. One or two songs in particular I actively disliked. A few verged into hardcore a little, and one had some vocals that were a little crusty, but mostly the songs did not go in that direction. Disappointed (not with Dead Broke, just in general) at the complete lack of female singers on the record (although one song had a woman and a man singing, and on another there might have been a female singing back up). Actually made me ruminate about the emergence of punk and the varied styles that came with it versus

where punk as a genre is going these days. Although not super into it, I still tip my hat to Dead Broke for putting the energy into it to get it together. —Jennifer Federico (Dead Broke)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Nardcore 30 Years Later: LP

Wow, this is some beautiful packaging! Gatefold sleeve, splatter vinyl and thirty-two page zine/book are included in this deluxe package. Features Ill Repute, Dr. Know, Retaliante, Rat Pack, The Kilz, Blasting Concept, and many more. Twenty songs by twenty bands will satisfy even the most ardent Nardcore fiend. Good solid compilation: sound quality is nice and all the bands rage. If you like this sound at all, you can't go wrong with this top-notch compilation. This was an obvious labor of love and I am sure it was a long time in the making. Great job on this release; would love to see more like it. —Mike Frame (Burning Tree)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Wrecktrospective: Twenty Years... And Counting!: 3 x CD

Twenty years!?! The early years of the label, I was all over their stuff. I was so happy when I started writing for *Flipside* again. I got on some list that I got almost everything! I fell off that list with the demise of *Flipside*. Once *Razorcake* started, yippee!, I was back on that list! I do have to admit that I haven't played as much attention the last few years, especially when they stopped sending physical releases. I'm

a music nerd. I want the full deal! But, also, many of my favorites broke up: Good Riddance, Wizo, Hi-Standard, Snuff, The Soviettes, and Tilt. Some others only did one release and moved to other labels. The newer bands didn't pique my interest, as my tastes had changed. If I saw a new release for review, I have been passing it on to someone else I knew would appreciate doing the review. But this collection did feel like going back in time. I haven't listened to a lot of bands on this release in a long time. I popped in Disc 1, which is titled *Fattest Hits* and wondered, “How does one determine a hit punk song?” There are no punk charts. How do you gauge something that is basically under the radar? Just a weird thought when I saw it. The whole gamut of bands are represented on disc 1. What I really loved was disc 2. It's a compilation of demos that I'm sure the majority of us never heard. My favorite tracks came from Good Riddance, The Soviettes, The Epoxies, Rise Against, and The Dickies. Disc 3 is the Fat Club 7's that I actually never got a copy of. I think Todd was the sole recipient of our crew. Bummed I didn't get the Strike Anywhere one. Overall, this is one motherload of a package. Congratulations Fat! You have hung in there, doing it with integrity. —Donofthead (Fat)

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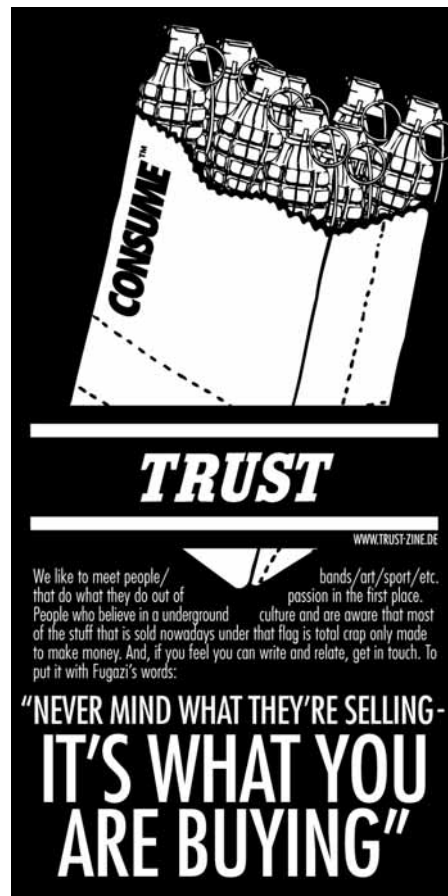
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We like to meet people/ that do what they do out of passion in the first place. People who believe in an underground culture and are aware that most of the stuff that is sold nowadays under that flag is total crap only made to make money. And, if you feel you can write and relate, get in touch. To put it with Fugazi's words:

"NEVER MIND WHAT THEY'RE SELLING- IT'S WHAT YOU ARE BUYING"

that falls somewhere between the Hipshakes and Black Lips on the underground musical spectrum. The drummer is the standout of the band, bashing away with lunatic intensity, holding the tunes together by the thinnest of threads. "Strictly Business" is a holwlin' wolf of a long lost Teenage Shutdown track. So is "Gamblin' Man." "Code C" is dark and foreboding and Rocket From The Tombs-ey. Apparently, Die Slaughterhaus had some trouble putting this 7" out due to the band members being difficult to get a hold of. If any of you are reading this, when's the next record coming out? —Josh Benke (Die Slaughterhaus)

VIBRATORS, THE: *Under the Radar*: CD
Reviewing new discs by old bands can sometimes be a bit tricky. On the one hand, you wanna be supportive as hell because they've chosen not to go the easy route and just rely on the hits, but on the other, the odds of it being crucial ear candy are slim, at best. When you're talking about a band like the Vibrators, the odds of success in the latter category decrease markedly because they've got one helluva back catalog with which to contend. That said, this ain't anywhere near the likes of *Pure Mania* or *V2*, so don't get yer hopes up. What it is, though, is a solid piece of mid-tempo, catchy U.K. punk rock done up by dudes who know their way around a hook. Is it crucial? I wouldn't say so, but it is good, which is more than I can say about three-

quarters of what I hear from bands one-third their age. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

WHATEVER BRAINS: *Saddle Up*: 7"

This sounds like the Marked Men holed up in log cabin high on peyote and paranoid as fuck. If there was any justice, this band would be playing in your town tonight! Top notch, weirdo garage punk that's all rock and no hype. —Daryl (Bull City)

WRISTER / NORTH TROLLS:

***Awww Shit! Split*: 7"**

Wrister blasts out some heartfelt punk tunes on this split. They play stuff that's akin to the lo-fi stylings of Friendly Fire and Jetman. Their song, "What Goes Down" has a lot of guitar noodling, but Wrister pulls off the rock licks without making their sound too pretentious. On the other side, North Trolls have a playful pop sound layered with harmonies. They have that whole They Might Be Giants vibe/sound going for them. In their track "Cheap Drugs," they lift the vocal melody from the old song "Can't Help Falling in Love" (of Elvis Presley and UB40 fame) to segue into the guitar solo and finish using the rest of the leftover melody for the ending of their song. It's sort of a nerdy songwriting trick but, damn, they know how to make some catchy tunes. —N.L. Dewart (No Breaks)

YOUNG LIONS: *From the Vaults*: LP+7"

A historic piece of punk rock history out of Toronto, Canada for those who were

not in the know. Archiving material from 1982-1984, this band probably only hit people's radar off their track on BYO's *Something to Believe in*. I also vaguely remember their name on the *TO Hardcore 83* cassette comp and that validated off their liner notes that I'd longed to have a copy of again, in one form or another. The Young Lions' punk sound is hard to replicate. It reminds me a lot of their Canadian comrades, the Subhumans. What might be classified as street punk today, I hear it as one of those forefather bands that have that genuine raw punk energy with melody and grit. A true treat and I am one who is grateful to have this see the light of day. Any release from Schizophrenic, you should order direct. You always get something special, either in packaging or special colored vinyl. —Donofthedeath (Schizophrenic)

YUM YUMS, THE: *Sweetest Candy*: CD

If you like pop punk or power pop and you haven't heard the Yum Yums, then I am jealous! Think of it this way: you still have the opportunity to listen to one of the greatest pop punk/power pop bands in the last fifteen years *for the first time!* This CD collects songs from their amazing album *Sweet as Candy*, plus a ton of 7"s, and other assorted yumminess! The song "Right Now" is quite possibly one of the best power pop songs *ever*. I have no idea why this band didn't end up on Lookout Records during their glory years. Maybe because they're from Norway? Did Larry Livermore harbor

an anti-Scandinavian prejudice? Perhaps! Anyway, this band is so ridiculously catchy, with strong power chords, songs about being in love, well-chosen cover songs (the Undertones' "Here Comes the Summer," the Pointed Sticks' "Out of Love," etc.). I recommend you start with *Sweet as Candy*, but that's just because I am a bit of a purist when it comes to "greatest hits" (or whatever) CDs. But I haven't heard a single thing this band released that wasn't amazing. If this were a cereal, it'd be Lucky Charms, hands down. (In case you're keeping track, Lucky Charms is the top designation that can be bestowed about a musical release. I love the Yum Yums! —Maddy (Kid Tested, kidtestedrecords.com)

ZUUL: *Air Raid*: 7"

This band knows exactly what they are going for, from the sound to the packaging. The sleeve looks like some killer private press metal single from the early '80s. The sound is standard New Wave of British Heavy Metal that would fit well between Saxon and Tank, or something along those lines. If you've got a bunch of Diamond Head and Budgie records, you might wanna check out this band. —Mike Frame (Planet Metal, myspace.com/planetmetal)

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- **Alternative Action**, PO Box 174, 11101 Riihimäki, Finland
- **An Historic** c/o Adam Matlock, 124 Mansfield St., New Haven, CT 06511
- **Anti-Creative**, PO Box 1528, Upland, CA 91785
- **Antipop**, 51-55 Highfield St., Liverpool, L3 6AA, England
- **Artifix**, PO Box 641, Moreno Valley, CA 92556
- **Bad Afro**, Halmatorvet 29, Bygn. 12 A, 1., 1700 Copenhagen V., Denmark
- **Bad Track**, PO Box 391, DeMotte, IN 46310
- **BDR**, PO Box 19202, St. Louis, MO 63118-9202
- **Berzerker**, 3957 Park Ave., St. Louis, MO 63110
- **Black Water**, PO Box 5223, Portland, OR 97208-5223
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- **Bull City**, 1916 Perry St., Durham, NC 27705
- **Burning Tree**, 10153 Riverside Dr., Suite 247, North Hollywood, CA 91602
- **Captain Oi**, c/o PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP10 8QA, United Kingdom
- **Chorizo Bonita**, 224 N. Ave. 55, Los Angeles, CA 90042
- **Chunksaah**, PO Box 977, Asbury Park, NJ 07712
- **Collectors Inc.**, 1432 NW 63rd St., Seattle, WA 98107
- **Contra**, Dresdener Str. 40, 04808 Wurzen, Germany
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- **Crappy**, PO Box 404, Redondo Beach, CA 90277
- **Credentials**, The, 90 Easton St., Allston, MA 02134
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- **Dirtnap**, 2615 SE Clinton St., Portland, OR 97202
- **Discontent**, 6123 Memorial Rd., Allentown, PA 18104
- **Douchemaster**, PO Box 5209, Atlanta, GA 31107
- **Eaglebauer**, 216 Buckingham Pl. Apt 2, Philadelphia, PA 19104
- **Eefin**, 707 E. Wright St., Milwaukee, WI 53212
- **Fast Crowd**, 3520 29th St., San Diego, CA 92104
- **Fat Possum**, PO Box 1923, Oxford, MS 38655
- **Fat Wreck**, PO Box 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119
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- **Get Hip**, PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317
- **Geykido Comet**, PO Box 93324, Las Vegas, NV 89193
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- **Gnarly As I Wanna Be**, 35 Brown Ave., Athens, OH 45701
- **Going Underground**, 1822 G St., Bakersfield, CA 93301
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- **Grave Mistake**, PO Box 12482, Richmond, VA 23241
- **Hardly Art**, PO Box 2007, Seattle, WA 98111
- **Heart & Skull/Epitaph**, 2798 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026
- **Heart Of The Lakes**, 1097 22nd Ave SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414
- **House Party**, 2629 Connolly St., Halifax, NS, B3L 3M4, Canada
- **Hovercraft**, 300 NW 8th Ave. #401, Portland, OR 97209
- **I Hate Punk Rock**, 4429 Patston, St. Louis, MO 63128
- **Independent Record Company**, The, 2609 NW 14th St., Oklahoma City, OK 73107
- **Inoculators**, The, c/o Murphy Lynch, PO Box 291806, LA, CA 90029
- **Insurgence**, 33 Hazelton Ave. Suite 18, Toronto, ON M5R 2E3, Canada
- **Iron Lung**, PO Box 95521, Seattle, WA 98145
- **It's Alive**, 11411 Hewes St., Orange, CA 92869
- **Kiss Of Death**, PO Box 75550, Tampa, FL 33675
- **Knowhere**, 655 Gradstone, East Grand Rapids, MI 49506
- **Latest Flame**, 1935 W. Schiller, Chicago, IL 60622
- **Lazy 8**, Studio #1, 750 W. 6th Ave., Vancouver, BC V5Z 1A5, Canada
- **Let's Pretend**, PO Box 1663, Bloomington, IN 47402
- **Lethal Triad**, 3814 Birchwood Cir., Harrisburg, PA 17110
- **Little Deputy**, 174 Delancey St. #6F, New York, NY 10002
- **Livid**, PO Box 276132, Boca Raton, FL 33427
- **Local Cross**, 1619 Commonwealth Ave. #2, Boston, MA 02135
- **Longshot**, 980 Harrison St., San Francisco, CA 94107
- **Maniac Squat**, PO Box 6058, 9702 HB Groningen, The Netherlands
- **Mayflower**, 173 E. 4th St., Oswego, NY 13126
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- **Pasazer**, PO Box 42, 39-201 Debica 3, Poland
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- **People's Republic of Rock And Roll**, 1195 St. Rd. 206 E., St. Augustine, FL 32086
- **Perpetual Motion Machine**, PO Box 7401, Richmond, VA 23221
- **Peterwalkie**, 408 Richmond Ave., Buffalo, NY 14222
- **Phratry**, PO Box 14267, Cincinnati, OH 45250
- **Plan It X South**, 720 Pickens Ave., Pensacola, FL 32503
- **Plan-it-X HQ**, PO Box 14001, Gainesville, FL 32604
- **Profane Existence**, PO Box 18051, Minneapolis, MN 55418
- **Protagonist Music**, PO Box 64574, Tucson, AZ 85728
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- **Repressed**, The, c/o Paul Lubaczewski, PO Box 1311, Bramwell, WV 24715
- **Rockin' Stan**, PMB 109, 19019 International Blvd., Seattle, WA 98188
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- **World Won't Listen**, 341 S. Monte Vista, La Habra, CA 90631
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- **Zero Substance**, PO Box 453, Leo, IN 46765
- **Zodiac Killer**, 655 Park Ridge Dr., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

ZINE REVIEWS

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"There is no excuse
for text-type and
emoticons in a
zine written by a
college student."

—Lauren Trout, *SUGAR
AND HEARTSTRINGS* #3

ASHCAN MAGAZINE, #2

(Fall 2009), \$2, free in Bay Area,
8 1/2" x 11", printed, 46 pgs.
I'm usually skeptical of magazines
like this that seem to suffer from
an identity crisis. Is it a literary
magazine or is it just a plain old
self-published zine? This one
includes zine reviews (but no
magazine reviews), and yet also
sports a masthead detailing the
editor, designer, and contributing
writers, artists, and photographers
(not a typical feature of a zine).
Setting these complications aside,
though, I dove in and found the
content to be more to my liking
than what I often discover in like
publications. The writing was
decent, the photos and art were well
reproduced, and the overall tone
was genuine and unpretentious.
Not bad for only being the second
issue. —Sean Stewart (Ashcan
Magazine, 660 4th St. #420, SF, CA
94107, ashcanmagazine.com)

BABYLON, \$4 ppd.,

5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 96 pgs.
The promotional insert calls this
a Southern Gothic novel in zine
format. It's a bleak, gloomy sort
of tale and I wanted to like it,
but it just didn't feel real to me.
The first-person narrator didn't
resonate as authentic, and I felt
absolutely no sympathy toward
him. This is a red flag for me when
reading any fiction. The rest of
the characters were either ugly,
forgettable, or both. The author
(Daisy Anne Gree) is not without
some skill, but I think she needs
to work on characterization.
Make your narrator likable in
some way, no matter how small
or odd, and I'll keep reading.
—Sean Stewart (geneva13.com,
lovebunnypress.com)

BITE THE CACTUS #5, \$1,

4 1/4" x 5 1/2", photocopied, 14 pgs.
This issue of *Bite the Cactus*,
subtitled both "Gamelan Party,
Bali Style" and "Bite the Durian,"
follows the adventures of Adrian

Chi as she travels to a small
island in Indonesia, playing with
a large group of musicians, to
study the origins of gamelan (a
form of music that originated with
gongs and developed into small
symphonies). *Bite the Cactus*
is illustrated and largely told in
panels. It's hard to not be charmed
by Adrian, who is self-aware as to
regret not learning more Balinese
before traveling, has a great eye
for the small details (the Balinese
are rabid kite flyers; Adrian may be
wearing a boy's hat), all the while
conveying her experiences from a
land most reading this review will
never go to. Your choice: A dollar
for an excellent zine or a thousand-
dollar plane ticket. —Todd (5676
York Blvd., LA, CA 90042, or
myspace.com/bitethecactus)

BLACK CLOUD, THE, #3, \$1,

5 1/2" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 36 pgs.
"What Grandma fails to recognize
is that no matter what your sexual
orientation, huge black dildos,
especially ones with huge bites
taken out of them, are always
hilarious." This magazine is about
Columbus, Ohio. —Noah W. K.
(The Black Cloud, 369 E. 15th Ave,
Columbus OH, 43201)

BLACKGUARD, #2

(Spring 2009), \$7 ppd.,
6" x 8 1/4", printed, 50 pgs.
This "adult" comic anthology
hailing from Australia features a
loose theme of "fathers." The only
name I recognized in the roster
of artists was the infamous Mike
Diana. I don't know much about
small press dirty comics though,
so it's entirely possible that some
of these others are well known in
their field, too. As with any comics
anthology, it contains a mixed
bag of content in terms of quality.
Most of the comics rely more on
shock value than on actual plot,
which was a disappointment,
although perhaps that's the point.
Also includes comics and zine
reviews. The editor seems like a

genuinely good guy who is really
supportive of DIY press, so if you
like your comics controversial
then you should probably get this.
—Sean Stewart (Blackguard, PO
Box 93, Paddington, NSW, 2021,
blackguard23.livejournal.com)

CHIRON REVIEW #89, \$7,

11" x 13", newsprint, 47 pgs.
Here we have lots of poetry by
lots of different authors. Most
seem to be punk themed, but
I can't seem to get into it. Put
some obnoxious music to it and
I'll pump my fist with the best of
them, but as is, this is too long and
well... just too damn long. —Noah
W. K. (Michael Hathaway, 522 E.
South Ave., St. John, KS 67576)

CORTES CRUDOS #6, free,

5 1/2" x 8 1/2", printed, 25 pgs.
Every single issue of this zine I've
seen has made me really proud of
and stoked on the Tijuana skate
and independent music scene.
It's not only in Spanish, it's
in TJ Spanish, which is a true
treat. It's got the works: letters
to the editor, interviews with the
newest up-and-coming thrashers,
band interviews, reviews, and
editorials. All created for free by
cool people who are just happy
to support the community around
them. TJ rules. —Rene Navarro
(myspace.com/cortescrudos)

COUGH #6, \$3 ppd.,

8 1/2" x 5 1/2", photocopied
with silkscreened cover, 36 pgs.
This is one of those youthful, anti-
capitalist spirited DIY zines that
has a bunch of how-to articles.
There's the overdone topics that
go in every zine of this nature
(Acid Wash Your Clothes! Wheat
Pasting! Dumpster Diving! Save
Money/ Get Stuff Free!), a bunch
of recipes (sugar scrub, honey
facial toner, toothpaste, all purpose
cleaner, berry vanilla playdough,
Febreeze, face paint, cold remedy,
jewelry cleaning solution), and
a random comic in the back.

Instructions on how to make a
homemade tattoo gun fall in the
"really stupid" category because
there's no disclaimer to warn you
about how crappy those permanent
marks on your body look when
done by an amateur. Feng Shui
can be easily researched on the
internet, and "How to Hardcore
Dance"? Well, I'm not even going
there. There are, however, a few
articles in this zine that managed
to impress me: moss tagging (yes,
making graffiti with the grassy
stuff), a two-page article on how to
spruce up your 40 oz. (like making
a "Coastcider 40" with cranberry
juice and pear hard cider), and a
"How to Skateboard" article
that is printed in an illegible font
except for the introduction, which
reads, "If you want to be cool, you
have to learn how to skate." Can't
argue with that. —Lauren Trout
(coughzine@yahoo.com)

COUPLA BEERS SHORT OF A SIX PACK, \$2,

5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 128 pgs.
Huh. Looks like this is an
anthology of *Free Beer*, a fanzine
out of Wisconsin that's apparently
been around for over fifteen years.
I dig the hand-done cardboard
covers and the definite feeling of
"make due with what you have"
that permeates this thing. The
interesting thing about the zine
and its author is that while he
maintains that he's done zines for
nearly twenty years now, there's
such an air of enthusiasm and
vitality here than *CBSOASP* reads
like it was penned by someone
much younger. Granted, this is
an anthology, a chronological
collection, but as a whole,
Free Beer (with its typewritten
anecdotes and crushes and
unabashed joy of music and
first bands and willingness to
admit when something's scary)
harkens back to a time in punk
culture when we all weren't quite
so cynical or slick or business
savvy. I certainly don't want to

raise the banner of the “good old days,” but *Free Beer* reminds me of a time—intentionally or not—when personal zines (or zines in general) weren’t anomalies but essential vehicles of communication and instigation. The layout’s consistently pretty dull, but, again, it’s Barney’s enthusiasm that carries him through here. —Keith Rosson (Barney c/o Tea Krulos, PO Box 511553, Milwaukee, WI 53203)

CROWN, LEG, TOOTH, \$?, 5 ½” x 8 ½”, copied, 21 pgs. “A collection of poetry about staplers and other invisible necessities.” Editor Rustin Wright is passionate about stapler poetry. According to the intro,

food stamps and he writes; “Hell, if you bring every piece of paper in your house, they’ll still find some reason to have you come back...” if that isn’t the truest statement about any governmental service, I don’t know what is. —Noah W. K. (Craven Rock, 10511 Phinney Ave. N., Seattle, WA, 98133)

EAVES OF ASS #7, \$?, Photocopied, 5 ½” x 8 ½” Craven Rock’s *Eaves of Ass* is one of my favorite zines going these days. In this issue, Craven writes about returning to Louisville to try and make some quick money as a cabby during the Kentucky Derby. He sets up his life so that he works like a madman for a few weeks, then uses the free time after

Something Better” book of Bay Area punk rock. There is a poignant and well-written essay of a cancer survivor, along with an interesting article on a soldier who returned from Iraq only to end up in jail. This is a printed zine, and has that great paper smell that I remember when I first started reading zines in the early ‘80s. *Fluke #8* also features interviews with Andrew Jackson Jihad, Paige Hearn, and Alan Short. —Steve Hart (PO Box 41931, Tucson, AZ 85717)

FOR FEAR THE HEARTS OF MEN ARE FAILING, 50 cents or a stamp, 8 ½” x 14”, photocopied, 1 pg. Sometimes all that a reviewer can really do is to lay out the

reviews of this zine in the past and wanted to check it out, so I was pleased to see this in my review envelope. I’m glad to say that the other reviewers weren’t lying. —CT Terry (Geneva 13 Press, PO Box 13, Geneva, NY 14456)

GET IT TOGETHER #1, \$?, 5 ½” x 8”, photocopied, 20 pgs. Lauren Measure is an inspiration to me. I “met” her through listening to The Measure [SA] records, and through the imperfect pipeline of DIY punk, our paths began to cross more and more often, even though we live three thousand miles away. *Razorcake* interviewed the Measure [SA], I’ve seen them play plenty of times, and we’ve shared bonding experiences that involved

“What Grandma fails to recognize is that no matter what your sexual orientation, huge black dildos, especially ones with huge bites taken out of them, are always hilarious.”

—Noah WK, *THE BLACK CLOUD #3*

he submitted some of his poems to a web design firm that had created a cool flash animated stapler website. The site already featured some stapler poetry, and so Wright figured maybe this was a good venue for him. Not so, as they never used any of his poetry. The result of his frustration and disappointment is this collection of stapler poetry. It’s this type of weird, spirited obsession that so imbues the world of zines and self-publishing. If you are into staplers or novelty poetry, then you’ll probably like this. —Sean Stewart (Streetcar Press, Suite 254, 1631 NE Broadway, Portland, OR 97232, info@streetcarpress.com)

EAVES OF ASS PRESENTS: PROMISE & THEFT, \$3, 5 ½” x 8 ½”, photocopied, 36 pgs. This magazine is put together by a dude who, like the rest of us, is feeling a little light in the pockets and heavy in the heart. However, he doesn’t keep it bottled up like the majority of us. He takes out his pen and paper and writes his story down. We are all experiencing the same times of economic strife, but each one of our stories is as individual as the next. In this case, this zine is much more than therapeutic for the writer, it’s also a very enjoyable read. My favorite line of the entire story comes while he is talking about trying to show proper documentation in order to get his

to live off of savings and write up a storm. He begins to call this lifestyle into question as the stock market crashes, the taxi business slows, and he’s hardly making enough money to pay off his cab. Craven does a great job of linking his interesting personal tribulations to the overarching problems of the contemporary world. It’s also cool to see his creative ethic described, and know it’s been put into action, since I’m holding the physical proof. You should hold it, too. —CT Terry (Craven Rock, 10511 Phinney Ave N., Seattle, WA 98133)

FEEDBACK #6, Free, 6 ½” x 8 ½”, Photocopied, 30 pgs. This is a cool zine made up of show reviews in the form of a page-long comic strip. The shows he goes to actually offer a wide arrange of sounds, which is cool. I love how he makes fun of cheesy hardcore shows, but—like the rest of us—was there nonetheless. It’s well-drawn and fun because, since there’s no straight story line, you can pick it up randomly and enjoy it a bit at a time. —Rene Navarro (unlay.com)

FLUKE #8, \$2.00, 5 ½” x 8 ½”, printed, 34 pgs. I’ve waited a long time to read a lengthy Christ On Parade interview and *Fluke* delivers! The interview is in-depth and somewhat of a companion piece to the “Gimme

facts instead of trying to interpret another’s person’s art to the readers. So what I will do here is tell you that this sheet of paper is filled with a single composition of bold typewritten text that conveys the hustle and bustle of the city in the author’s stream-of-consciousness writing. This belongs tacked up to the wall somewhere in your house. Props to the author for not putting this in a poetry chapbook, by the way. —Lauren Trout (FF MRF, 3099 King St., Berkeley, CA, 94703)

GENEVA 13 #10, \$2, 5 ½” x 8 ½”, photocopied, 60 pgs. Geneva 13 is a zine dedicated to life in the upstate New York town of Geneva, in the Finger Lakes region. Since this issue came out around the holidays, the theme is “Giving.” Inside are profiles of local charities, plus stories about generosity, all laid out with cool new and old photos from Geneva. With a subtitle like *A Zine of the Local*, I was worried that the tone of the writing might be pushy and self-congratulatory, sort of like when people who are into going green and buying locally are so smug about it that they almost eclipse the positive thing that they are doing. I did not get that feeling from *Geneva 13*. These people honestly love where they live and are proud to be boosting it to one another while sharing it with the world at large. I’d read great

third-party, inappropriate urination developments in our midst. Lauren is also one of *Razorcake*’s secret weapons, being one of our most reliable, crackerjack graphic designers. So, Lauren will hopefully understand that when I say *Get It Together* is like a collection of those inspirational posters—like of a cat hanging precariously from a branch with the text “Hang in there!” underneath—I mean it in a totally non-cheesy, non-corporate-office, get-your-ass-outta-bed inspiration in a style that is instantly recognizable as her own. This zine is sorta like koans: something to mill over again and again. —Todd (751 Bushwick Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11221)

GREAT MYSPACE SWINDLE, THE, \$2 or trade, 8 ½” x 5 ½”, photocopied w/ color cover, 32 pgs. Wait, so you’re telling me that if you post a fake profile of a hot girl on Myspace, you’ll get a ton of comments and friend requests from creepy guys? Wow, I would never have guessed... —Lauren Trout (Sean Logic, 660 4th St #420, SF, CA, 94107)

GULLIBLE #29, Photocopied, quarter-size, 42 pgs. By writing about his youth, CT Terry approaches a lot of interesting topics—race, identity, class and family—but to say this makes his writing sound like it is

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forcing these issues. That is hardly the case. In fact, these stories are rather simple, well-written, warm-hearted, and often funny. It really takes you into the writer's life for a while. There are stories about first times being drunk, how his parents met, and the misconceptions people have had of him and his family. He has a unique experience and take on race, due to his parents being a multiracial couple and

HAPPYPANTS #6, free or trade, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 20 pgs. Reading this magazine makes me very jealous of the writer for the places he has been. Well, I mean, a majority of this is written about the writer's trip to Africa, a place in which I have a newfound interest. Heck, I am even taking a Geography of Africa course. This story of the writer's time there is not only informative, it is also a

with some hardcore here and there. This guy has a knack for following the bands from their demo to their vinyl, which I have to give a thumbs up to. For some reason, I rarely hear demos from bands. The editor, Erik, definitely loves the music he writes about. It shows in the reviews—how he can reference back catalog material and insights from seeing these bands live on a tour two or three years ago. The

captivated my attention. Nothing special; I relate to the story, but my favorite part is the actual cartoon work. It's kind of a mess and chaotic, but it fits so well. Also, we were both at Insubordination Fest this past summer and—from his drawings—we had a similar experience. Too bad we don't know each other and didn't hangout. We could have palled around and I could have been

"This music isn't going to cure cancer, end world hunger, or give America affordable medical care. It's just music. If it's not fun, it's not worth doing, right?"

—M.Avrq, *I WAS A TEENAGE ZOMBIE #2*

himself being light-skinned and often mistaken for being a white person by his peers. His writing style is simple yet poignant and he seems to make strong (social and political) points almost unintentionally. A while back—I'm paraphrasing—CT had mentioned that he wanted to move away from the humorous, anecdotal-type writing he was doing in earlier issues to write stuff that he felt was more important or had a stronger message. I, however, found nothing wrong with the funny slice-of-life stories he was doing and hoped he wouldn't change his style too much. It appears that he has managed to do both. The stories he has chosen to tell still have the same lightness and humor, but he definitely succeeded in what he was going for. —Craven Rock (gulliblezine@gmail.com)

GUTWRENCH #2 and #3, free, 8 1/2" x 5 1/2", photocopied. Kick-ass. A zine by someone who is in a band I like. I love it when that happens. Like when I found out someone from Witches With Dicks did *Wet Cement*. Awesome band, awesome zine. I guess it makes sense. But this isn't *Wet Cement*, this is *Gutwrench*, which is done by Max of Friendly Fire. Another awesome band. Issue #2 is a tragic comic of the band's house burning down while they were on tour. Definitely a brutal thing to go through. Issue #03 is twenty-one different portrayals of a dog. Some of them are pretty damn funny. These are both worth checking out, especially if you're a fan of Friendly Fire's cover art. —Daryl (323 S. Cherry St., Richmond, VA 23220)

fun story that compares Kenya to Mexico City. I still want to go visit. The other place the writer talks about is the North Park Awesome Fast. There are so many bands that played that I would have loved to see, but this writer seems to be more excited about bands I probably would have skipped out on. Oh well, to each his own. —Noah W. K. (Happypantszine@gmail.com)

IF AN AGENT KNOCKS, \$?, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", offset, 52 pgs. *Do not talk to federal agents without a lawyer present. Do not consent to searches without a warrant.* There have been a million of these types of these things published over the years, all essentially saying the same thing: don't consent to a search and don't talk to feds or cops. Yes, there are exceptions to those rules and, yes, it's usually a bit more complicated than that. Regardless, that's what it always seems to come down to. There are plenty of subsections throughout the zine—wiretapping, grand juries, entrapment, the searching of vehicles, etc. It's all written simply and directly if a little short of pizzazz. But it also doesn't try to be more than it is—just a very basic primer on what a citizen's (and noncitizen's!) rights are regarding interactions with the federal government. —Keith Rosson (Center for Constitutional Rights, 666 Broadway, 7th Floor, NY, NY 10012)

I WAS A TEENAGE ZOMBIE #2, \$?, 8 1/2" x 11", photocopied, 20 pgs. Decent music-based zine from the Midwest which is largely centered around reviews of indie and garage,

one thing I found annoying was in the opinion pieces, when he would fret about what people with behavior—or whatever—that he didn't like, were doing at shows listening to the music he likes. Then later on, he contradicts himself with a review of Distort, saying "essentially, music is for everyone". Yeah, I agree. So stop worrying about why someone, or some crowd you don't approve of, is at the same shows as you. Who cares? This music isn't going to cure cancer, end world hunger, or give America affordable medical care. It's just music. If it's not fun, it's not worth doing, right? So, chuck the social registry in the trash, and just focus on the music. You could very well have a zine that people will respect. —M.Avrq (Erik Meyer, 1142 Illini Dr, O'Fallon, IL 62269)

LEGEND DONDAYO, \$12, 4 1/4" x 6 1/4", printed, 78 pgs. Maiana Minahal has reconceptualized an ancient Filipino legend, framing it in a queer context and transferring some sections into modern times. I'm not familiar with the original legend, so I can't say how much she's altered the tale, but it seems well done to me. So if the topic sounds good to you, then I'd say it's worth your while. —Sean Stewart (Civil Defense Poetry, PO Box 11812, Berkeley, CA 94712, civildefensepoetry@gmail.com)

MY LIFE IN FOUR PANNELS: THE FIRST FOUR MONTHS, free or trade, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 36 pgs. Usually, comics do not amuse me these days. However, this one has

part of his awesome comic. I've always wanted to be in a comic. Well, at least I want to be in one now. —Noah W. K. (Alejandro Valdes, 323 Willowbrooke Ln., Royersford, PA 19468)

NO MORE COFFEE #2, \$2, Photocopied, 5" x 8", 30 pgs. This is a fiction zine. Usually, when I hear those two words together, I kind of cringe. Zine writers are usually too stuck in the personal writing mindset to pull off quality fiction or else they are too flakey to go to the trouble and number of drafts necessary to make a solid story. Other times, they are too trapped within their milieu and bog their stories down with too many insider references, such as band namedropping and the like. Then there are the bullshit stories where the author has politics or an agenda (such as anarchism) that they have to push. This makes their stories come off as moralistic, which never makes for a good story. *No More Coffee* avoids all of these trappings. I liked some of these stories better than others, but they were all well-written and imaginative. —Craven Rock (Ben Spies, 1847 W. Byron St., Chicago, IL 60613)

ON LOVING DRACULA, \$1 or trade, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", copied, 24 pgs. I was psyched to see a horror zine, especially one as single-minded as this tribute to Universal's *Dracula*. This is a twenty-four hour zine, which is kind of a bummer, because the author's vision would have been better served by more time. Still, his analysis of the film is surprisingly deep for something completed



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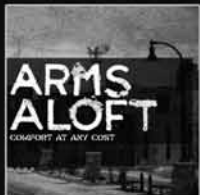
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so quickly, and a bibliography is included for further reading. I would have loved to see the author bring in more of a personal approach to his love of *Dracula*, though. I want to know why this movie means so much to him. He touches on this briefly, revealing that he hadn't seen the movie until his teenage years. This caught me by surprise. For me, *Dracula* was one of the movies I watched with

gather more high-quality material before she puts the next one out. —Keith Rosson (Nora Goddard c/o Roadkill Studio, 3324 Truost Ave., Kansas City, MO 64109)

ROADKILL V.2 #2, Photocopied, 7" x 8 1/2"

A fringe zine from Kansas City that promotes local goings-on by reviewing shows and getting contributions from community

of ghost stories, stories with inconclusive endings, and of a cat that's always getting scared. This *Spider*, like previous ones, is more than the sum of its parts. It's a microcosm of what's right in DIY in the present tense. The cover's hand-screened, the five previously unreleased Pine Hill Haints songs on the 7" are top drawer, (and, in a way, remind me of the *Sing Along with Pooh* record and books of my

1705 Prospect Ave NE, Olympia, WA 98506 or aminafoxdye@gmail.com)

TRAINWRECK #7, \$1, Photocopied, 4 1/4" x 5 1/2"
Trainwreck has all the touchstones of the punk per-zine: tours, van break-ins, break-ups, spontaneous moves, late night walks, drugs. The writing is fast-paced, never a drag, but I found myself wishing

"Free Beer reminds me of a time when personal zines (or zines in general) weren't anomalies but essential vehicles of communication and instigation."

—Adrew Flanagan,
COUPLA BEERS SHORT OF A SIX PACK

my dad when I was very young. It planted the seed for my love of horror. By the time my teenage years rolled around, I had moved onto much more brutal stuff and lost sight of the classics. This zine reminded me to go back and check them out. —MP Johnson (Redguard, PO Box 1568, NY, NY 10276)

PUNK LIFE #41, Photocopied, 5" x 8", 54 pgs.
A music zine that didn't interest me at all. I found all of the constant footnotes that were way longer than the articles themselves to be completely confusing and off-putting. —Craven Rock (no address)

ROADKILL Vol. 2 #11, \$3, 7" x 7", copied, 24 pgs.
One of those zines that's saddled itself with a self-imposed deadline—apparently these folks have shot for one issue a month for a year, which is a pretty lofty goal. So on one hand, the editor and her friends should be congratulated for sticking to their guns and putting something out when they said they would. On the other hand... I don't know what the previous ten issues looked like, but this one's definitely got that slapped, filler-page undercurrent running through it: random typewritten paragraphs, some comics and top ten lists, a so-so interview with a fashion designer currently living in Berlin, some collage stuff, reviews, etc. Like I said, it's great that Nora and her friends have followed through with this, but I think she's got the right idea in her intro when she says she's going to

members. There's a little bit of a lot of things in here and it can be a muddle, but my favorite part was the extended, illustrated diary of the zinester's time working on a sugar beet farm. —CT Terry (Nora Goddard c/o Mutiny Infoshop, 3109 Troost Ave., Kansas City, MO 64109)

RUM-MUFFEL #1, €1, 5" x 6", photocopied, 20 pgs.
This is a split between *Rum Lad* and *Morgenmuffel* and it tells the illustrated tale of two English zinesters traveling into the wilderness and then to a zine convention, with this collaboration in mind from the get-go. It's charming—there's a self-effacing warmth to both of the narrators that invites the reader in as an omniscient third party to their adventures. Being heavily illustrated and that the authors take turns telling the story, it's also a very cool look at how two artists approach the same experiences, giving the zine a nice depth, in addition to their wonder of wide open spaces and thoughtful interpersonal interactions. —Todd (Somerset House, Cherry Holt Lane, Sutterton, Boston, Lincs, PE20 2HU, UK)

SPIDDER #14, \$5, 7 1/4" x 7 1/4", silk-screened, inside-of-cereal-box cover, photocopied, includes Pine Hill Haints 7", 17 pgs.
Arkam/Black Owl Radio is an institution. At its helm are Jamie and Katie, and this edition of *Spider*—all hand-drawn and hand-written—continues along in the Southern gothic tradition

youth) and nothing seems hasty or mass marketable. As with food—if you take it slow and buy direct from the source when you can, you'll enjoy it that much more. Great stuff. Worth well more than the five bucks they're asking for. —Todd (Arkam, 1925 Hwy 69 S., Savannah, TN 38372)

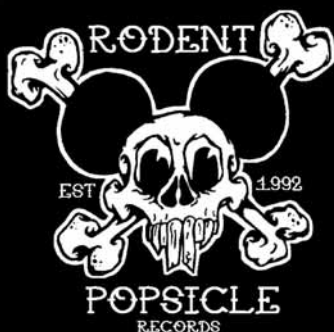
SUGAR AND HEARTSTRINGS #3, \$1 or trade, photocopied w/ color cover, 24 pgs.
If this were a blog written by an eight year old, the grammar might be acceptable, but there is no excuse for text-type and emoticons in a zine written by a college student. The first two "stories," are really just rambling about learning how to budget the money her parents send her, then self-esteem issues and blah blah blah. Sample sentence: "Don't shoot the mail-person or whatever, amirite? Like wtf owowow." The sad thing is that the last story in here is about emotional abuse and it's done in plain English, with no emoticons, and a severe-looking background. I'm no psychologist, but seeing her break into the "heavy stuff" at the end leads me to believe that all the ridiculousness of the first part of the zine was an effort to convince the reader that she's not really screwed up from whatever problems she faced with her parents. But really all it does is show that she's insecure about her writing or revealing too much about herself, which ruins her credibility and makes it impossible to take seriously. Hiding behind lol's and smiley faces, you could say. —Lauren Trout (Amina Foxdye,

that Dave would slow down and describe more every now and then. What really elevates *Trainwreck* is the strong sense of local pride in New Haven and the rest of Connecticut. My favorite parts were the love/hate list about New Haven, where punks can live off the excesses of Ivy Leaguers, and the conversation with Brian Frenette about Connecticut scene history. Says Dave, "Connecticut's larger urban centers... will never be cultural meccas or thriving punk scenes. It is a state lifted of expectations to be cool, and everyone acts accordingly." Word up. —CT Terry (Dave Brainwreck, 74 Dwight St. #2, New Haven, CT 06511)

WEIRD FICTION REPORT, #4, free, U.S. and Canada, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2" copied.
A zine about the weirder side of life, particularly about a lot of horror, sci-fi, and rare/underground comics. Admittedly, I don't know much about these topics, but this is a good place to learn about them. This issue features reprints of some horror fiction by Henry Kuttner and H.P. Lovecraft. Neat stuff. —Joe Evans III (Freedom School, 96 North 6th St., Brooklyn, NY)

A million more zine reviews can be found at www.razorcake.org. Not really, but there's a lot.





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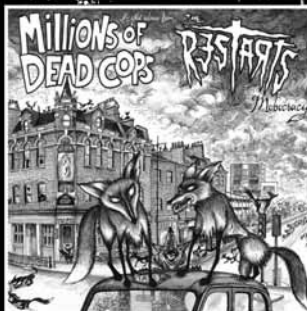
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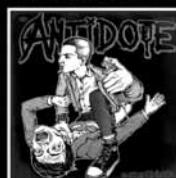
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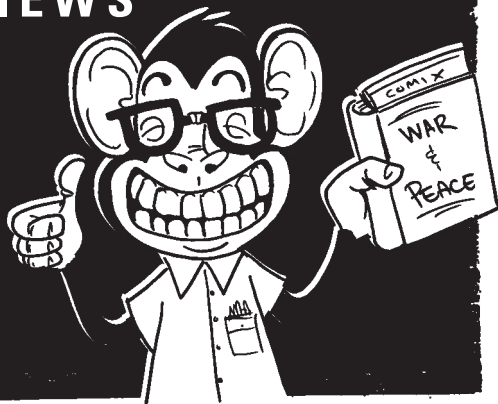
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BOOK REVIEWS



The Death of Bunny Munro

By Nick Cave, 288 pgs.

This is a romance novel that requires a sense of humor, albeit a very sick sense of humor, which is what stopped me from labeling it a romance comedy. Like all of Nick Cave's work, it requires a certain detachment from reality to not roll your eyes and just go with it. While the book is a long list of characters such as Bunny Sr. or Poodle, the only two characters developed in depth are Bunny Monroe and his son, Bunny Jr.

The book revolves around Bunny Munro's psychotic escapades and his newfound relationship with his son whom he barely knows (as an actual parent), brought on by his wife's suicide. Imagine *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* set in modern England with a scared, over-intelligent little kid in the car, which is a Punto. It's prime real estate for fans of Chuck Palahniuk or Irvine Welsh, who offers a glowing review on the back cover under the large heading: "Praise for NICK CAVE." Once again, don't roll your eyes and just go with it to unveil the story of a man addicted to booze, cigarettes, horrific pop music, and pussy. If that last word made you uncomfortable, do not get this book, as it appears in surprisingly biologically correct detail on almost every other page. —Rene Navarro (Canon Gate)

Sheriff McCoy: Outlaw Legend of Hanoi Rocks

By Andy McCoy, 204 pgs.

Let's be frank here: at this point in history, the celebrity autobiography bookshelves are about as crowded as the Harlequin romance shelves, and the quality of the product is about as dubious. Hell, even Miley Cyrus, Paris Hilton, Nicole Ritchie, and many others too goddamned young to have been driving for very long, let alone truly *lived*, have been cranking

out tomes about the trials and tribulations of being them for the gossip-addicted masses to gobble up in the hopes of getting some inside dirt on who did dope with/hates/loves/screwed who. When someone who's truly done something of note, or at least grabbed life by the huevos and spent a good many years living like a total nutter, appeals to their inner writer (or in the case of Henry Miller, writes *while* pushing the envelope right off a fucking cliff), sometimes the story is worth a listen. Andy McCoy has lived through things that would cause most sane people to look at him and marvel at just how lucky he is to have survived a third as long as he has. Abusive home life? Check. Screwing around with pretty much any substance one can eat, drink, snort, smoke, or shoot? Check. Falling from the fourth floor of a building? Check. It's all here, along with being the glam-punk answer to Keith Richards, playing alongside everyone from the UK Subs' Charlie Harper to Iggy Pop, and watching Hanoi Rocks crumble after their drummer Razzle was killed in a car crash with Mötley Crüe's Vince Neil at the wheel. As a writer, McCoy's a good guitar player. A few more editing passes with attention given to providing a linear structure would've been invaluable, as the timeline bounces here to there and back again throughout. He also seems, on occasion, to either be reluctant (or disinterested) to scratch deeper than the surface and get into why he—and so many other rock stars—find it necessary to get themselves involved in some of the things they do, like heroin for instance. A little more introspectiveness would've gone a long way, especially when explaining some of his apparent contradicting attitudes towards drug use. Still, he can definitely spin a good yarn, and *Sheriff McCoy* is well stocked with some good tales, some fun, some funny, and some downright harrowing. As someone who hasn't had much more than a passing fancy for Hanoi Rocks over the years—never complaining when they were on, but never bothering to go further than buying a copy of *Oriental Beat*—and is not familiar with his other musical projects outside of Briard and Urban Dogs, he managed to keep my interest piqued well enough that I'm inclined to let the flaws slide. In short, this was better than it has any business being, and that's intended as a high compliment. —Jimmy Alvarado (Bazillion Points, bazillionpoints.com)

You Don't Have To Fuck People Over to Survive

By Seth Tobocman, 168 pgs.

Wait a sec... You don't have to fuck people over to survive? Whew... I gotta stop doing that! But seriously, folks—on the surface, this collection of the works of political graphic artist Seth Tobocman may look like a series of potential Rage Against The Machine T-shirt ideas, but it's actually an extremely interesting glimpse into what it was like to be an activist in New York City the 1980s: battling against Reaganomics, poverty, and New Coke. Well, maybe not New Coke, but you get the idea. Some parts of this book look like you're passing by block after block of visually stimulating, politically charged graffiti, while there are other parts that reminded me a lot of graphic novels such as *Maus* by Art Spiegelman. Originally published in 1989, this reissue also includes some newer artwork about the tragic cases of Amadou Diallo and Mumia Abu-Jamal, the latter of whom Tobocman is sort of the art world version of, if that makes any sense. —Andy Conway (AK Press, 674-A 23rd St., Oakland, CA 94612)

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DVD REVIEWS



Between Resistance and Community:

A Documentary about Long Island DIY Punk: DVD

I had never heard of any of the bands featured in this DVD, but maybe I'm just not plugged into the right scene or something. Originally filmed in 2001 and released on DVD in 2009, this features Latterman, On The Might Of Princes, The Insurgent, Seven Days Of Samsara, and interviews with local show-goers and activists. Despite my ignorance of the Long Island scene, I immediately enjoyed watching the bands rock out in a basement, surrounded by friends and fans singing along. At a show in another basement, there's a great scene with the Mom cooking for all the kids (I hope they've since returned the favor and are cooking for her, now that they're older). Some of the bands went out on tour, while others debated whether or not to sign to an indie label or not. Although this wasn't my favorite part of the film, it still showed the passion that was in the scene towards bands they considered their own. This is a thoughtful film and showed a side of punk rock that I am proud to be part of: hard-working, DIY, and willing to wear their hearts on their sleeves. —Steve Hart (Cantankerous Titles, PO Box 14332, Portland, OR 97293)

Goner Fest 4: DVD/CD

This DVD serves as a vivid snapshot into the 2007 inception of Goner Fest, which is three days of sweaty, rollicking fun in Memphis, Tennessee hosted by garage punk mavens Goner Records. You almost feel transported into the various clubs, record stores, and backyards where the action took place. It really does give you the feel of wandering around Goner Fest and taking in different bands in various venues. I even started to recognize some of the more recurring spectators (like the guy in the Firehouse shirt, for example). Personal highlights include the late Jay Reatard bashing out two songs with snarling vigor, the Boston Chinks, a song culled from an intimate set with Reigning Sound singer Greg Cartwright, and the great Marked Men. There's also a CD, which includes different songs from some of the bands than the stuff on the DVD, which is a pretty cool way to hear more material from bands you may not have been familiar with before checking this out. Recommended if you've been bummed out since 2007 that you didn't get to go to Goner Fest that year. This will help ease the pain a little. —Andy Conway (Goner, 2152 Young Ave., Memphis, TN 38104, goner-records.com)

Lost Kisses: DVD/xeroxed mini-comics

I try to avoid reading the promo sheets before I review something. So I was pretty intrigued to watch this. Animated zine-like stories? Sure, why not? But, as it turns out, this DVD is just still images of the original mini-comics, with this annoying overly dramatic/semi-experimental music played in the background. And so, I went to the promo sheet for answers. It turns out that this was originally put together for "television development, but things fell through and video rights were tied up for the next few years." The DVD also came with a bunch of mini-comics (the size of a matchbox), so I thought I'd review them all at once. There's really no nice way to say this. The main character is pretty annoying. And I think that might be the point, but it's kind of hard to want to watch slow-moving panels of stick people (literally) where the main character can't even seem to get out of his own head, even when his childhood best friend dies or when he may have inadvertently helped a random person kill his ex-girlfriend (at which point, the stick figure in question decides that his ex-girlfriend was so evil and her death sort of evens things out, in some bizarre way).

Maybe this guy is just really, really depressed. That would explain the level of self-absorption here. Maybe this guy is a fictional character, which would be my hope. But either way, I couldn't get into this. I can't imagine anyone I know getting into this. Harsh? I guess, but that's how I feel. On a strangely positive note, the story of him/the main character accidentally helping someone kill his ex-girlfriend was at least interesting, plot-wise. (It involved a bizarre series of circumstances, including the following: a grocery store discount card, several thousand dollars, and his decision to leave her house key in her front door). But on a negative, unrelated note, why would you want to take something as perfect as a xeroxed mini-comic and make it into a DVD? No animation, just the scanned images. I tried turning off the annoying background music and instead playing Belle & Sebastian, then Jay Reatard, then the Mountain Goats, and then, for no apparent reason, the Magic Kids 7". It didn't help. On a technical note, the layout is confusing. The panels are broken into two parts, and you're supposed to read the bottom panel first, or so I imagine, but your brain (or at least my brain) automatically reads the top panel first. It ended up being pretty distracting. I still can't help hoping that zinesters succeed with what they're trying to do, but I have to draw the line somewhere. —Maddy Tight Pants (Silber Media, PO Box 18062, Raleigh, NC 27619)

Open Your Mouth And Say... Mr. Chi Pig: DVD

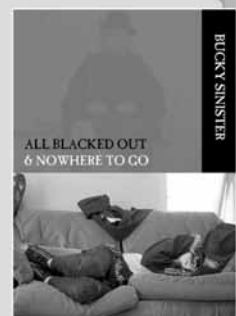
I was excited to see that this documentary about Ken Chinn a.k.a. Mr. Chi Pig was actually going to see the light of day. Chi is the lead singer of legendary Canadian punks SNFU, who also happen to be my favorite band. I was also a little apprehensive since I've known Chi for the better part of the last twenty years. I know where his life has taken him.

The film is laid out nicely with a lot of different interviews with Chi and a plethora of people who have crossed paths with him over the years. He discusses his childhood and his discovery of punk as well as meeting the Belke brothers, starting SNFU, and their adventures around the world all the while sinking into mental illness and self medication with street drugs. I would have liked to see a little more live footage in the movie, but there is some good stuff. Chi's story is compelling and he is a true artist. I hope he continues to keep his demons in check. Definitely worth checking out. —Ty Stranglehold (Prairie Coast Films)

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